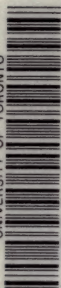


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POETRY & LIFE.

MARLOWE & HIS POETRY

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Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus"
From an old engraving.

MARLOWE & HIS POETRY

BY

JOHN H. INGRAM

Author of "Christopher Marlowe
and his Associates" etc.



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GENERAL PREFACE

A GLANCE through the pages of this little book will suffice to disclose the general plan of the series of which it forms a part. Only a few words of explanation, therefore, will be necessary.

The point of departure is the undeniable fact that with the vast majority of young students of literature a living interest in the work of any poet can best be aroused, and an intelligent appreciation of it secured, when it is immediately associated with the character and career of the poet himself. The cases are indeed few and far between in which much fresh light will not be thrown upon a poem by some knowledge of the personality of the writer, while it will often be found that the most direct—perhaps even the only—way to the heart of its meaning lies through a consideration of the circumstances in which it had its birth. The purely æsthetic critic may possibly object that a poem should be regarded simply as a self-contained and detached piece of art, having no personal affiliations or bearings. Of the validity of this as an abstract principle nothing need now be said. The fact remains that, in the earlier stages of study at any rate, poetry is most valued and loved when it is made to seem most human and vital; and the human and vital interest of poetry can be most surely brought home to the reader by the biographical method of interpretation.

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This is to some extent recognized by writers of histories and text-books of literature, and by editors of selections from the works of our poets ; for place is always given by them to a certain amount of biographical material. But in the histories and text-books the biography of a given writer stands by itself, and his work has to be sought elsewhere, the student being left to make the connexion for himself ; while even in our current editions of selections there is little systematic attempt to link biography, step by step, with production.

This brings us at once to the chief purpose of the present series. In this, biography and production will be considered together and in intimate association. In other words, an endeavour will be made to interest the reader in the lives and personalities of the poets dealt with, and at the same time to use biography as an introduction and key to their writings.

Each volume will therefore contain the life-story of the poet who forms its subject. In this, attention will be specially directed to his personality as it expressed itself in his poetry, and to the influences and conditions which counted most as formative factors in the growth of his genius. This biographical study will be used as a setting for a selection, as large as space will permit, of his representative poems. Such poems, where possible, will be reproduced in full, and care will be taken to bring out their connexion with his character, his circumstances, and the movement of his mind. Then, in

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addition, so much more general literary criticism will be incorporated as may seem to be needed to supplement the biographical material, and to exhibit both the essential qualities and the historical importance of his work.

It is believed that the plan thus pursued is substantially in the nature of a new departure, and that the volumes of this series, constituting as they will an introduction to the study of some of our greatest poets, will be found useful to teachers and students of literature, and no less to the general lover of English poetry.

WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON

PREFATORY NOTE

THE carefully collated publications of Professors Albrecht Wagner and Hermann Breymann have been used for the text of "Tamburlaine," "Doctor Faustus," and "The Jew of Malta"; the remainder of the pieces quoted from, with one exception, are from the Rev. Alexander Dyce's 1865 edition of Marlowe's Works, collated with, in cases of doubt, the earliest available editions. The one exception, "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love," is from a contemporary manuscript first published in my work on "Christopher Marlowe and his Associates," from which work most of the particulars given herein of the poet's life and career are derived. Little trustworthy information about Marlowe was available until the publication of my essay on him in the "Universal Review" for July 1889, and of the above-named volume in 1904: the chief data about Marlowe, given in recent encyclopædias and other works of reference, are derived from these writings.

JOHN H. INGRAM

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CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE was born in the city of Canterbury on February 6, 1564, and christened there on the 26th of the same month, at the church of St. George the Martyr, where his parents had been married. He was descended from a family of traders, who had lived in Canterbury for several generations, and had from time to time left bequests for the benefit of their fellow-citizens. These Kentish Marlowes were frequently freemen of the city, and generally belonged to the Guild of Shoemakers and Tanners. John Marlowe, a member of this fraternity, was married on May 22, 1561, to Catherine, the daughter, apparently, of the Rev. Christopher Arthur, a former rector of St. Peter's, Canterbury. John Marlowe, although trading as a shoemaker, was a freeman of the city, and evidently a person of some civic standing. Several children were born to the youthful couple, but our story is only concerned with their eldest son Christopher, doubtless named after his maternal grandfather.

Christopher's parents did not neglect the boy's education, and it is probable that both of them were better enabled to instil the rudiments of school knowledge into his mind than were most of their neighbours: his mother, as the daughter of a clergyman, and his father, who

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ultimately became parish clerk of St. Mary's, Bredman, as a scholar. There was much in Canterbury itself to aid the formation of a clever boy's mind. The performance of 'miracle plays' took place in the city at Lent, and upon certain festivals, and it is scarcely possible that Christopher was not among the spectators on these occasions. Upon the mind of such an imaginative being as he was these rude but suggestive presentations must have made a strong impression.

In the records of St. Dunstan's Parish, Canterbury, are entered payments for these religious dramas, or Corpus Christi plays as they were designated. "To the Guild of Corpus Christi in particular was assigned the drama or Mystery in forty acts, which traced the whole progress of Bible history, beginning with the Creation and ending with the Last Judgment." This guild was held in Holy Cross Church, just outside the West Gate, at the very spot where one of Christopher's ancestors had provided for the upkeep of a public crucifix, and only a few minutes' walk from his native parish. These strange, often vulgar and brutal public performances "frequently exhibited the chief personages of Holy Writ in a sort of comic burlesque; and one strong part was Noah and his wife fighting previous to their entry into the Ark, a point which not only awakened the undisguised glee of the diabolic personages of the drama, but called forth the unbounded applause of . . . the devout audiences of Canterbury." This

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would not only familiarize Marlowe with dramatic representation, but would tend to render Scriptural subjects contemptible in his sight.

Other still less edifying amusements were common. Bull-baiting, cock-fighting, and even dog-fighting were popular sports. It is to be hoped that the children were kept away from the horrors of the 'Bull's Stake,' in the Butter Market ; yet it is difficult to believe that a lad having the use of his eyes and limbs could be unacquainted with the atrocities committed upon the miserable bulls, whose flesh, by a special decree of the Burghmote, or Common Council, was not allowed to be sold unless the wretched beast had been baited before it was slaughtered.

Other reprehensible subjects were matters for public exhibition. Executions were anything but infrequent, and it was usual for parents to take their children to witness the sending out of life of the more or less unfortunate criminal, as a salutary warning for the youthful spectator. Such terrible object-lessons for an imaginative boy could not but leave their impress upon his mind, and it is only reasonable to deem the blood-thirsty scenes of Marlowe's first-known work the outcome of much that he had beheld in his early days.

When Christopher was in his tenth year Queen Elizabeth visited Canterbury, and was magnificently entertained by the authorities. Archbishop Parker met her at the cathedral door, to which she had ridden on horseback ;

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and not until her 'grammarian,' one of the scholars of the King's School, had finished his oration did she alight and go into the cathedral to evensong. She kept her birthday at the Archbishop's palace, where she and all her gorgeous retinue were sumptuously regaled, at an enormous expense, by the worthy ecclesiastic. It cannot be doubted that young Kit was an interested spectator of the fêtes devised for the Queen's edification, even if he took no active part in any of them. It is natural to suppose that his boyhood was neither unhappy nor, for his after-career, unprofitable.

Death visited the Marlowe family and bore away a sister and his little brothers; but these things are inevitable, and rarely cause more than a passing sorrow in the morning of life. The child saddens for a time over the loss of a play-fellow, but others gradually take its place, and the wound closes, scarcely leaving a scar.

The chief educational institution of Canterbury is the King's School, said to be the oldest grammar school in England. It was, traditionally, founded by Archbishop Theodore in 968, but was re-established and given its royal title by Henry VIII. Marlowe received his early education at this ancient seat of learning, but the date of his entry is unknown. A certain number of deserving boys were accepted as 'commoners'—that is, as lads who studied at the school yet were not on the foundation. These lads were eligible for the foundation provided they had the capacity to win a scholarship

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before they attained the age-limit of fifteen. The King's scholars were elected by merit, at the November Chapter, from among those boys who had been some time at the school, to fill such vacancies as might occur in the ensuing year. Marlowe was one of these successful lads, and was admitted on the foundation on January 14, 1579—that is, in the quarter ending at Lady Day. Each of the scholars after admission received a quarterly stipend of one pound—no inconsiderable sum in those days.

The King's School was intended for the education of the sons of what the historian terms "the best families," but Archbishop Cranmer, at the re-establishment of the school, instructed the commissioners, who sought to restrict the scholarships to the children of high-born, wealthy parents, "If the gentleman's son be apt to learning, let him be admitted; if not, let the poor man's apt child enter his room"; and so Marlowe, proving apt, was admitted. Archbishop Parker, who was of his predecessor's way of thinking, endowed the school with various scholarships at Cambridge University, open to all who proved their fitness.

The curriculum of the school comprised a certain quantum of Latin, and, probably, a little Greek for the higher forms; but modern languages were ignored. For those intending to enter one of the learned professions a good sound classical foundation was provided, and as Christopher was destined for the Church this provision was necessary for him. The King's

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School had already acquired a reputation for learning, and several of its scholars had obtained good positions in the clerical world. Dr. John Ludd, one of the headmasters, "had at one time no less than thirty-seven Masters of Arts of his own bringing up," a rare feat at that time. Of Richard Boyle, afterward the noted Earl of Cork, it is recorded that he "must have been well grounded [educationally], for he was exceptionally accurate in his syntax and orthography, and, when mindful, wrote a fair hand"—all unusual accomplishments for a nobleman of Elizabeth's days. Some of the lads signed for their quarterly stipends—unfortunately, not including Marlowe—and their calligraphy is worthy of the school's reputation. Many of Christopher's fellow-students at Canterbury became famous in after-years, an interesting item of proof that his education was favourable to his natural genius.

✓ As the accounts of the King's School for 1580 are missing, nothing further can be learned of Christopher's career at Canterbury save that he gained a scholarship there for Cambridge. Archbishop Parker had founded various scholarships at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, the place of his own education, and his final provision was scholarships for three lads of the King's School; one of these three was gained by Marlowe. The qualifications for the candidates were that they had been born of honest parents, that they were well instructed in grammar, able to write and sing, "and, if it may

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be, *such as can make a verse.*'' Christopher's ability to comply with the last of these requirements may be assumed, if English and not Latin, as is the more probable, were intended. The lads sent up to Cambridge were to be such as were thought likely to proceed in Arts and afterward to make Divinity their study. Upon these conditions they were entitled to their scholarships for six years; otherwise they might cease after three years.

The college records prove that Marlowe was admitted toward the close of 1580, but the University books show that he did not matriculate or obtain formal admission as a member of the University until March 17, 1581. Although, as recently as 1579, a special regulation had been passed that students were to matriculate within a month of coming to Cambridge, the rule was not enforced, and in some instances six months elapsed before the admitted student matriculated.

As will be seen, Marlowe was not yet seventeen when he arrived at Cambridge, yet he must have deemed himself a man amidst the many younger than himself residing there. It was no unusual circumstance for boys much younger than he was to obtain admission to the universities in those days; Francis Bacon, for instance, being only twelve years old when he went to Cambridge. Most of the students were treated as children, were subjected to corporal punishment, and ruled like a body of juveniles.

Marlowe was not likely to suffer from pecu-

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niary troubles, if he managed his expenditure with any prudence, as, besides any allowance his parents might make him, the Canterbury Chapter, ever mindful of their scholars' reputation for learning, granted as much as five pounds at a time, a sum quite equal to forty pounds of money nowadays, to the schoolmaster of the King's School, to help the boys at the University; besides which he had the emoluments from his scholarship. In accordance with Archbishop Parker's agreement with the college authorities, his 'Canterbury scholars' were allowed twelve pence a week each for commons, laundry, barber, and other necessities, and in addition to their education were to be provided with convenient apartments, together with reading in the Hall free. The rooms which Marlowe had to share with his two chamber-mates, Thexton and Lewger, were not very commodious, and were constructed out of a 'storehouse.' The so-called 'chamber' consists really of two very small rooms opening into one another, on the ground floor in the north-west angle of the court; they are, apparently, in almost the same condition now as when Marlowe and his two fellows lived in them. Although separate beds were allowed for scholars above the age of fourteen, separate rooms, even for Fellows, were rarely permitted, and the three Canterbury scholars must have been put to strange shifts to have got three beds, even 'truckle-beds,' into the space provided.

From contemporary records it is seen that

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the prevalent style of university living in Marlowe's time was wretched. The studies and mode of existence at Cambridge, at least by poorer students, are thus described : " There be divers there which rise daily about four or five of the clock in the morning, and from five till six of the clock use common [commons?] prayer, with an exhortation of God's Word, in a common chapel ; and from six until ten of the clock use ever either private study or common lectures. At ten of the clock they go to dinner, whenas they be content with a penny piece of beef among four, having a pottage made of the broth of the same beef, with salt and oatmeal, and nothing else. After this slender diet they be either teaching or learning until five of the clock . . . whenas they have a supper not much better than their dinner. Immediately after which they go either to reasoning in problems or to some other study, until it be nine or ten of the clock ; and then, being without fires, and fain to walk or run up and down half an hour to get a heat on their feet when they go to bed."

Doleful accounts are extant, given by other university scholars, and statements have been preserved of students having to make their own beds and sweep out their rooms ; but Corpus Christi was better off than some of the colleges, thanks to the provident kindness of Archbishop Parker. Mindful of the hardships of his own college times, he gave considerable sums of money for firing, food, and other necessities,

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and had the precincts paved so that the students were not obliged to take their exercise on the bare and oft-times muddy earth. Parker also gave money to provide the students with an annual feast, and bequeathed his valuable books and manuscripts to the college, coupled with the charge of some rare plate, which was only to be retained as long as the manuscripts were preserved by the college, a condition which has ensured the safety of both plate and manuscripts.

As college life filled so large a space and was so momentous a period in Marlowe's short existence, an official record of the daily routine, somewhat different from the poor scholar's account, will scarcely be deemed redundant : " In the morning, at five o'clock, the students were assembled by the ringing of the bell, in the college-chapel, to hear the morning service of the Church, followed on some days by short homilies by the Fellows. These services occupied about an hour ; after which the students had breakfast. Then followed the regular work of the day. It consisted of two parts : the college studies, or the attendance of the students on the lectures and examinations of the college tutors or lecturers in Latin, Greek, Logic, Mathematics, Philosophy, etc. ; and the University Exercises, or the attendance of the students, together with the students of other colleges, in the public schools of the University, either to hear the lectures of the University professors of Greek, Logic, etc. . . . or to hear and take part in the

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public disputations of those students of all colleges who were preparing for their degrees.

“After four hours or more so spent, the students dined together at twelve o'clock in the halls of their respective colleges. After dinner there was generally again an hour or two of attendance on the declamations and disputations of contending graduates either in college or in the public schools. During the remainder of the day, with the exception of attendance at the evening service in chapel, and at supper in the Hall at seven o'clock, the students were free to dispose of their own time. It was provided by the statutes of Christ's that no one should be out of college after nine o'clock from Michaelmas to Easter, or after ten from Easter to Michaelmas.”

Strict rules for the behaviour of the students were made ; they were closely confined within their colleges, only leaving them for attendance in the public schools. They might only go into the town by special permission, and even then no student below the standing of a B.A. in his second year was allowed to go unaccompanied by his tutor or by a Master of Arts. When in conversation with each other, except when in their own rooms, the students were required to use either Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, and when permitted to go into the town they were forbidden to enter taverns, or to be present at boxing matches, skittle-playing, dancing, bear-fights, cock-fights, or similar entertainments ; or to visit Stourbridge Fair, or to loiter in the market or the streets.

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These enactments were difficult to enforce, and in some colleges were ignored. "The rule of not permitting students to go beyond the walls of their colleges was much modified." The students were to be seen walking about the streets with no certainty that they were talking Latin, or might not visit the 'Dolphin,' 'Rose,' or 'Mitre' by the way. These were their favourite taverns in Cambridge; "the best tutors," said the scapegraces, "in the University." Bathing in the Cam, although strictly prohibited, was a constant practice, as were many other things forbidden by decrees which were forgotten, or defied. They were not to read irreligious books in their rooms; nor to keep dogs, or "fierce birds"; nor to play at cards or dice, except for about twelve days at Christmas; nor to do many other things, under danger of various penalties.

Of course, where a number of lads and young men are congregated together such offences as these were bound to be committed, and to meet offences penalties of different kinds were provided. These penalties consisted of fines, varying with the nature of the offence; imprisonment for serious or repeated misbehaviour; rustication, with the loss of one or more terms, for still more flagrant transgressions; and expulsion from college and University for serious criminality. Corporal punishment was frequently inflicted, and in one at least of the colleges there was a regular weekly service at seven in the evening to witness the administra-

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tion of this chastisement on offenders. It is not positively stated up to what age corporal punishment might be inflicted, but after eighteen it seems to have ceased, and even younger students, if above the rank of undergraduates, were exempt from it. No record of the ordinary punishments appears to have been preserved, but rustication or expulsion would be known.

In "The Benedict," a Cambridge magazine, for Lent term, Dr. H. P. Stokes, a Marlowe authority, gives some instances of offences and punishments incurred at Cambridge during one of the years Christopher was in residence. The case of Evance, a scholar of Pembroke Hall, is noteworthy. The youth had been committed to prison for three days by the Vice-Chancellor, "because he lay hid when sought for by the Bedel and had neglected to appear; and on the 25th of February [1583] he was beaten with rods before all the youth of the University in the Public School Street, because he had propounded scandalous, foolish, and opprobrious questions at the disputations of the questionists, and because he had made an assault with a club and had thrown stones when a play was exhibited in the College of Corpus Christi."

This extract shows that dramatic entertainments were not objected to by the authorities; indeed, they were encouraged, "being held necessary for the emboldening of their junior scholars," says Thomas Heywood, the dramatist, who at this period was a Fellow of Peterhouse. He states that "dramatic entertainments were

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publicly acted, in which graduates of good place and reputation have been specially parted " (i.e. given parts). Although the plays were generally in Latin, English plays were occasionally acted by the students and before distinguished visitors.

These matters show the kind of life the students passed at the University and how their characters were formed for good or ill. Of Marlowe's career at Cambridge, as at the King's School, only good is known. If he transgressed any laws or broke any rules history has no record of the circumstance. One thing is certain, and must have influenced the boy and the man : he was brought into contact both at Canterbury and Cambridge with dramatic performances, such as they were then, and beheld them admired and encouraged.

The University terms were fixed by the statutes of Elizabeth. The academic year began on October 10 ; and the first, or Michaelmas, term ran from that day and ended on December 16. Then followed the Christmas vacation of four weeks. The second, or Lent, term began on January 13 and ended on the second Friday before Easter. The Easter vacation of three weeks followed, and then came the Easter term, extending from the second Wednesday after Easter Sunday to the Friday after ' commencement Day,' which was always the first Tuesday in July, and held after the termination of the Assembly of the University. The Long Vacation of three months then began.

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Although there were vacations at Christmas and Easter, it was not usual for the students to leave the University at those times without special permission, and it was only during the Long Vacation they had an opportunity of visiting their homes. Corpus Christi collegians, in accordance with Archbishop Parker's agreement, only had leave of absence for one month in the year, and only received their allowance during half of this time. Marlowe is known to have had a vacation, or leave of absence, for every year of his residence at Cambridge, but it is very uncertain how long he was away on these occasions. Professor Moore Smith has prepared a list showing the periods of Marlowe's absences, based upon the amount of money he drew; but as he was not aware of the half-pay system, or has ignored it, his data seem to need modification.

Where Marlowe spent his holidays is unknown, although it may be assumed that he returned home to his kindred in Canterbury at least during the earlier years of his college career, but as he naturally formed acquaintances, and some in a higher class of life than that of his family, it is probable that he sometimes visited them. One thing is certain, that the various wild guesses of his editors that he might have spent a portion of his time in the army or in foreign travel have nothing to support them. Until he settled in London his time can be fairly well accounted for.

The full period of the University career was

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seven years. Four years' course of study—that is, twelve *full* terms of residence in a college—were necessary for the attainment of the B.A. degree, and during this period a set course of study and examinations had to be carried out. Many students never attained to this dignity, and it is a conclusive proof of Marlowe's perseverance as well as his ability that he passed through this ordeal successfully, and in 1584, apparently, as early as it was possible to do so, obtained his B.A. degree.

Notwithstanding hard living and the dull routine of college life in those days, the students naturally varied study with outbreaks of fun and frolic. Nashe, a contemporary at St. John's College in 1584, had evidently a real incident in mind when he referred to his life-long enemy, Gabriel Harvey, having had "thy hood turned over thy ears when thou wert a Batchelor, for abusing of Aristotle, and setting him upon the school-gates painted with ass's ears on his head." Robert Greene, another contemporary at St. John's, declares that deeds of darker hue were committed by the Cantabs of his time, and confesses that he was one of the blackest offenders; but his statements do not deserve the notice they have received, his mendacity being too notorious. Even if he did, after he had obtained his B.A. degree, mix with "wags as lewd as myself, with whom I consumed the flower of my youth," his example was not followed by Cantabs in general.

Those students who wished to advance beyond

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their B.A. degree were required to reside three more years at the University, to go through higher courses of study, and to perform fresh acts in the public schools and colleges, as well as pass through various further examinations. There was still much to be done by the scholar who intended to commence Master of Arts, and unless Marlowe complied with all these requirements his original idea of taking Holy Orders might have to be abandoned. The authorities admitted it was often impossible, "consistently with the demands of the public service, for men of education . . . to reside as punctually as before during the three additional years required for their M.A. degree"; therefore, despite all the stringent regulations, relaxations of the rules were allowed. These relaxations, however, did not prevent Marlowe pursuing the stipulated course of six years enjoined for Parker's 'Canterbury scholars.' During the year 1584-1585, according to Professor Moore-Smith's figures, he was absent only on short occasions during each term; while his chamber-fellow Lewger was, apparently, absent the whole year. The records for the following year are not available, but those for 1586-87 show Marlowe in residence for more than half the time up to Lady Day, by which date he had completed his full period of six years. In July 1587 he took his M.A. degree and was free from University life.

During the latter period of his residence at Cambridge it is natural to believe Marlowe was interested in something besides his stipulated

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studies. At that time the universities were seething with seditious doctrines. Free-thought in matters spiritual and temporal was prevalent amongst the educated classes, and therefore particularly so in the colleges. As long as the opinions expressed were regarded as philosophical problems they were not directly attacked, but when it was seen that they impugned any State-established theological or political dogma no mercy was shown to their promulgator. Whatever a person's thoughts, silence was the only safe way of avoiding the axe, or the brand, or at best lengthy imprisonment. Francis Kett, who left Corpus Christi College in 1580, about the time Marlowe entered it, was burned to death for having uttered and published unorthodox notions about the Trinity; and many others shared his fate. Thomas Harriott, the great mathematician and astronomer, writing to Kepler, deplored having to live at a time in which it was impossible to express one's views freely; and his feelings were shared by most of his learned contemporaries.

It was impossible for a man of Marlowe's independent mind and illimitable imagination to allow his ideas to be bound by the rules and tenets of the narrow creeds and dogmas of his fellow-collegians, but there is no proof that he so far committed himself as to publish his views to the world otherwise than as the opinions of his dramatic characters, as of people outside the pale of Christendom. He had worked his way through the whole of the University curriculum,

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and besides completing his six years' term of residence had attained to his Master of Arts dignity in so respectable a way that in later times his name would have appeared among the Wranglers ; nevertheless it is certain that he had given up the thought of taking Holy Orders. ✓

Marlowe's first published work, " Tamburlaine," is a proof that he had been already a close student of poetry for some years, for no inexperienced youth could have produced such a play, nor have wrought so revolutionary a change in the national drama, without some previous years of mental and mechanical labour. Most commentators on Marlowe's works deem that he spent some of his academic time in translating the Latin poets into English, and assume that Ovid's " Elegies " was one result of this early period of his career. The version of the " Amores " ascribed to Marlowe was not published until some years after his death, and has nothing to indicate that he really had anything to do with it beyond the fact that the title-page bears the initials ' C. M. ' Marlowe's name then was as valuable as Shakespeare's became subsequently, and it is well known how fraudulently that was appropriated by publishers. The earliest editions of these " Elegies " were, professedly, issued in Holland, and were not entered in the Stationers' Register. The fact that the book had never been licensed in England was the reason for its inclusion, with various other unlicensed works, in the conflagration

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ordered by the bishops in 1599 : this, and not the immorality of the work, was the cause of its destruction, as has been pointed out by Isaac D'Israeli. The translation was evidently the work of a young man ; and if by Marlowe, which is very doubtful, was apparently not intended for publication. Although spirited and fluent, and even in advance of any previous poetic translation in the language, it gives no indication of Marlowe's after skill or scholarship, and might have been executed equally well by some of his contemporaries.

The mental struggles which beset the young author when he wished to resign his idea of entering the Church and betake himself to literature are clearly portrayed in his drama of " Doctor Faustus " :

Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin
To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess.
Having commenced, be a Divine in show.

The thought was natural for the young man that, after having been kept and educated on a scholarship provided for a clerical career, in all honesty he should assume the rôle of a divine ; but further mental examination showed him that, thinking as he thought, he could not pretend to expound the dogmas of a creed in which he no longer believed. He examines the various other paths open to a scholar. Philosophy, of the schools, could not satisfy his aspirations, nor logic his ambition ; and the discussions of the schools appeared but paltry

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to a mind "still climbing after knowledge infinite : "

Is to dispute well Logic's chiefest end ?
Affords this Art no greater miracle ?
Then read no more, thou hast attained thy end.
A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit.

Medicine has no attraction for him :

The end of Physic is our bodies' health :
Why, Faustus, hast thou not attained that end ?
Are not thy bills ¹ hung up as monuments
Whereby whole cities have escaped the plague,
And thousand desperate maladies have been cured ?
Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.
Couldst thou make men to live eternally,
Or being dead, raise them to life again,
Then this profession were to be esteemed.
Physic, farewell !

Jurisprudence is considered, but at the best is

A petty case of paltry legacies ! . . .
Such is the subject of the Institute,
And universal body of the Law.
This study fits a mercenary drudge
Who aims at nothing but external trash,
Too servile and illiberal for me.

His reflections bring him back to the Church.
"When all is done, Divinity is best." But his
mind is too unsettled to rest at this conclusion :

The reward of Sin is death ? that's hard.
If we say that we have no sin
We deceive ourselves, and there's no truth in us.

¹ Prescriptions.

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Why then, belike we must sin, and so consequently die.

Ay, we must die an everlasting death.

What doctrine call you this *che sera, sera*,

What will be, shall be ? Divinity, adieu.

He cannot find a solution for these irreconcilable contradictions, and will have no more of Divinity. The thoughts of Holy Orders having been abandoned, and all the professions having been condemned, the only occupation open to him is Literature or, as he phrased it in "Doctor Faustus," Necromancy, which would give him dominion far beyond that of any earthly sovereign :

O what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, and omnipotence,
Is promised to the studious Artizan !¹
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command : emperors and kings
Are but obeyed in their several provinces ;
But his dominion that exceeds in this,
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man.

Such were the reflections which Marlowe voiced through the mouth of Faustus, and such evidently were the thoughts which decided him to forego his long-promised career in the Church. College life was given up, Cambridge bid farewell, and the youthful scholar went forth into the unknown future.

¹ Worker.

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II

✓ **A**LTHOUGH "Faustus" has been quoted from for its evidently autobiographical allusions, the first work by which Marlowe came before the public was his drama of "Tamburlaine." When the young poet came to London, although publicly unknown, he must have had friends and acquaintances there amongst those who had preceded him from the University. With literary men and lovers of literature he formed many friendships. Those with whom it is known that he associated included George Chapman, the translator of Homer, to be a friend of whom was a good reputation in itself, such an honourable character did he bear; Drayton, Peele, Sir Walter Raleigh, and the Walsinghams. That he knew and co-operated with Shakespeare seems equally certain. What more than anything obtained him friendships and made him famous "not for an age but for all time" was the production of his first drama, "Tamburlaine." It is difficult to settle absolutely when this play was first put upon the stage, but it could not have been later than 1588. The earliest known edition of it was printed in 1590, and when published the author's name was not given on the title-page. The work was probably issued without the consent or knowledge of Marlowe, and without his inspection of the proofs, although the omission of his name may have

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been in consequence of certain college or university restrictions. Richard Jones, who published it, as well as many of the earliest known works of other writers of repute, was characterized by Thomas Lodge as "a needie pirate," and Nicholas Breton declared he was "an unfair dealer," hence it may be inferred that Marlowe reaped little or no benefit from the speculation. The title-page, in accordance with prevalent custom, bore a lengthy inscription :

Tamburlaine

The Great.

Who, from a Scythian Shepheard,
by his rare and woonderfull Conquests
became a most puissant and migh-
tye Monarque.

And (for his tyranny and terrour in
Warre) was tearmed,
The Scourge of God.

Deuided into two Tragicall Dis-
courses, as they were sundrie times
shewed upon Stages in the Citie of
London.

*By the right honouvable the Lord
Admyrall, his seruantes.*

Now first and newlie published.

London :

Printed by Richard Jhones : at the signe
of the Rose and Crowne neere Hol-
borne Bridge. 1590.

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Whether Jones had any permission to print and publish "Tamburlaine" or not, he issued it with an address over his own initials "To the Gentlemen Readers: and Others that take pleasure in reading Histories." The address runs thus :

Gentlemen, and curteous Readers whosoever : I have here published in print, for your sakes, the two tragicall Discourses of the Scythian Shepheard Tamburlaine, that became so great a Conqueror and so mightie a Monarque. My hope is that they will be now no lesse acceptable unto you to read after your serious affaires and studies than they have bene (lately) delightfull for many of you to see when the same were shewed in London upon stages. I have (purposely) omitted and left out some fond and frivolous Jestures, digressing (and in my poore opinion) far unmeet for the matter, which I thought might seeme more tedious unto the wise than any way els to be regarded, though (happly) they have bene of some vaine conceited fondlings greatly gaped at, what times they were shewed upon the stage in their graced deformities ; nevertheless now, to be mixtured in print with such matter of worth, it wuld proove a great disgrace to so honorable and stately a historie. Great folly were it in me, to commend unto your wisdomes either the eloquence of the Authour that writ them or the worthinesse of the matter it selfe ; I therefore leave unto your learned censures both the one and the other, and my selfe the poore printer of them unto your most curteous and favourable protection ; which if you vouchsafe to accept, you shall ever more binde mee to imploy what travell and service I can, to the advauncing and pleasuring of your excellent degree.

Yours, most humble at commandement,

R. I. Printer.

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Whatever position Jones held in respect to the publication of these two dramas of "Tamburlaine," it is pretty evident that he had assistance or advice of a literary character, both as regards the editing the works and with respect to omitting the clownage portions of the plays, portions which Marlowe is scarcely likely to have foisted into his "honourable and stately history." These "fond and frivolous" actions, which the groundlings or pit frequenters insisted upon being introduced into the most solemn and tragic dramas, were provided by the stage manager, and were frequently given, in the shape of "gag," by clowns, or the comedians themselves. Authors, however indignant at "such conceits as clownage keeps in pay," had to endure them; these buffooneries being introduced between the acts for the benefit of the pit. Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter, in his satire of "Virgidemiarum," thus refers to the vulgarity of these interludes in connexion with Marlowe and his "Tamburlaine":

One higher pitch'd doth set his soaring thought
On crowned kings, that fortune hath low brought :
Or some upreared, high-aspiring swaine,
As it might be the Turkish Tamburlaine :
Then weaneth he his base drink-drowned spright,
Rapt to the threefold loft of heaven hight,
When he conceives upon his faigned stage
The stalking steps of his great personage,
Graced with huff-cap terms and thundring threats,
That his poor hearers' hair quite upright sets.

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Now, lest such frightful shews of Fortune's fall,
And bloody tyrant's rage, should 'chance apall
The dead-struck audience, midst the silent rout,
Comes leaping in a self-misformed lout,
And laughs, and grins, and frames his mimick face,
And justles straight into the prince's place ;
Then doth the theatre echo all aloud,
With gladsome noise of that applauding crowd.
A goodly hotch-potch ! when vile russetings
Are match'd with monarchs, and with mighty kings.

Probably Ben Jonson was more embittered by these inflictions than any of his contemporaries. He vented his feelings respecting the audiences who called for such diet as decent dramatists did not provide in lines like these :

The wise and many-headed bench that sits
Upon the life and death of plays and wits,
(Composed of gamester, captain, knight, knight's
man,
Lady, or pucelle, that wears mask or fan,¹
Velvet or taffeta cap, ranked in the dark,
With the shop's foreman, or some such brave spark
That may judge for his sixpence) had, before
They saw it half, damned the whole play, and more ;
Their motives were, since it had not to do
With vices, which they looked for, and came to.

The literary men of the period soon learnt that Marlowe was the author of the drama, as references to it by his envious contemporary Robert Greene, Gabriel Harvey, and others prove. The sources whence Marlowe derived

¹ In those days ladies who attended public theatrical performances were masked.

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his story of "Tamburlaine" were only identified in 1883, by Professors C. H. Herford and A. Wagner. There is really no doubt left that the history, in many respects mythical, of "Tamburlaine" was mainly drawn from an English translation by Fortescue of Pedro Mexia's Spanish account of "The Scourge of God," and from some further particulars in a Latin work by Petrus Perondinus. Marlowe added to and altered some of the data furnished by his two authorities, and developed the characters of the two rival empresses, Zenocrate and Zabina, not, it is suggested, "without a thought of Elizabeth and Mary." It may be added that Marlowe's additions to and divergencies from his authorities were artistic and conducive to the dramatic colouring of his work.

The second of the "two Tragically Discourses" referred to in the title-page was a second play, or sequel to "Tamburlaine," apparently produced in hot haste in consequence of the popularity obtained by the first drama. This continuation is set forth on the half-title of the second part of the 1590 edition in these terms: "The Second Part of the bloody Conquests of Mighty Tamburlaine. With his impassionate fury, for the death of his Lady and love, faire Zenocrate: his fourme of exhortacion and discipline to his three sons, and the maner of his own death." The Prologue states:

The general welcomes Tamburlain (*sic*) receiv'd,
When he arrived last upon our stage,
Hath made our Poet pen his second part.

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“ Tamburlaine ” created a new dramatic era and produced a deep and lasting effect upon English literature, if not upon English thought. “ Marlowe’s mighty line,” as Ben Jonson aptly described the blank verse in which the young collegian enshrined his “ high astounding terms,” was a new thing for England. Hitherto nothing worthy the name of “ blank verse ” had appeared in the language, and certainly had never been heard on any public stage. The unrhymed lines which one or two gentlemen of leisure had substituted for the prevalent “ jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits ” gave no forecast of the magnificent music with which this flood of rhymeless rhythm startled the town. The Prologue the youthful author flung out like a challenge to his dramatic contemporaries runs thus :

From jygging vaines of riming mother wits,
And such conceits as clownage keepes in pay,
Weele lead you to the stately tent of War,
Where you shall heare the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatning the world with high astounding tearms,
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering
sword.

View but his picture in this tragicke glasse,
And then applaud his fortunes as you please.

This drama, the first, apparently, Marlowe had written for the stage, gives the impression of being the work of one author, produced without the collaboration of any other writer, and solely the production of a young, impetuous genius,

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unrestrained by any shackles of convention or custom. Marlowe was not one of those few great poets who can create distinct individualities and portray different characters ; all his chief personages, save perhaps in his last drama of " Edward the Second," are manifestations of his own personality. The reader feels that he must identify the hero with the author ; and even Tamburlaine, the incarnation of audacious ambition, endowed with indomitable faith in himself, seems a personal portrayal of Marlowe's own idiosyncrasies. Of course, the *actions* of his personages have no bearing upon the matter ; it is only the mental phases of his characters which coincide with the young revolutionary's.

Marlowe not merely struck a new key in poetry. He was not only an innovator in literature. In his fearlessness and his scorn for the limited views of his neighbours he does not refrain from attacking time-honoured faiths and antique superstitions. Priests and their resultless prayers had often been scoffed at, and defeated monarchs had been derided ; but in these instances the individual and not the system had been attacked. Now the undaunted youth dared to question the credibility of creeds and assail the divine right of kings ! He does not dissemble his opinions on theological matters, on statecraft, or on rulers, and sets forth his thoughts as freely as he would have men's speech be. As " the Scourge of God " Tamburlaine decides and proves the impotence of human

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creeds and the instability of regal institutions. Ancient monarchies crumble as card fabrics before the low-born shepherd-warrior, and the spiritual power claimed by priests dissolves as clouds before his material might.

The utterance of these dangerous if not altogether new ideas, even when voiced only by his dramatic personages, was scarcely likely to pass unnoted, and, indeed, his contemporaries did not fail to recognize and animadvert upon his fight for freedom of thought. Such things brought him the friendship and sympathy of similarly minded men, but his enemies attempted to make of his words weapons for his destruction. Through his lay figures Marlowe did not shrink from reference to Christians, "ringing with joy their superstitious bells," even as he derided the impotence of "Mighty Jove and holy Mahomet" to help their followers against misfortune. He classed all creeds alike. Yet he did not disown belief in one supreme Being, "First mover of that sphere . . . the glorious frame of Heaven!" although again and again he iterates to die is not "perchance to dream," but "to slumber eternally"; he asserts the freed soul will be "resolved in liquid air," and "I am assured that death ends all."

The modernity of all these revolutionary words is the surprise for readers who bask amid the poetry of Elizabethan writers. He is no maker of sonnets to his mistress's eyebrow, or of love lyrics to her shoe-strings. His thoughts are of the countless centuries of mental

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oppression, priesthood and monarchy have caused, and of the rigid limits built up between man and man. As befits a son of the people, he proclaims to down-trodden aspirants :

Your births shall be no blemish to your fame,
For virtue is the fount whence honour springs,

and

I . . .

Shall give the world to note for all my birth,
That virtue solely is the sum of glory,
And fashions men with true nobility.

A man who thinks like this needs no oaths to ratify his word, and may be trusted when he asserts :

My friend, take here my hand,
Which is as much as if I swore by Heaven,
And called the gods to witness of my vow.

That there is much in "Tamburlaine" open to criticism and, judged by modern standards, much to blame, is too true ; but, as Mr. A. H. Bullen has pointed out, "there is nothing mean or trivial in the invention" ; adding "the young poet threw into his work all the energy of his passionate nature. He did not pause to polish his lines, to correct and curtail ; but was borne swiftly onward by the wings of his imagination . . . indeed, the beauty of some of the most majestic passages is seriously marred by the introduction of a weak or ill-timed verse."

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The bombast of which the drama is full, and its exaggeration, "carried sometimes to the verge of burlesque," although largely due to youthful inexperience, must not be wholly ascribed to Marlowe. The work is evidently replete with error, and some of the finest passages damaged by misprints ; but when all deductions have been made and every blemish admitted, what a magnificent work of genius remains ! Compared with every previous English drama, the result was marvellous. The mere mechanical skill with which it had been constructed by its young author was so great an advance upon the work of all previous dramatists, whilst the conception of the hero, with his infinite ambition, his inordinate lust of dominion, and unbounded belief in his own victorious destiny, was wholly Marlowe's. The personal description of the "Scythian shepherd" may have been derived from his Latin biographer, but into what a noble and poetic picture does the youthful Cantab transmute the commonplace language :

Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned,
Like his desire lift upwards and divine,
So large of limbs, his joints so strongly knit,
Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear
Old Atlas' burthen ; 'twixt his manly pitch,
A pearl more worth than all the world is plast,
Wherein by curious sovereignty of Art
Are fixt his piercing instruments of sight
Whose fiery circles bear encompassed
A heaven of heavenly bodies in their Spheares,

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That guides his steps and actions to the throne,
Where honor sits invested royally ;
Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,
Thirsting in him with sovereignty and love of arms.
His lofty brows in folds do figure death,
And in their smoothness amity and life.
About them hangs a knot of amber hair,
Wrapped in curls as fierce Achilles was,
On which the breath of heaven delights to play,
Making it dance with wanton majesty.
His arms and fingers long and sinewy,
Betokening valour and excess of strength ;
In every part proportioned like the man
Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine.

Well might the Persian prince reply :

Well hast thou portrayed in thy terms of life
The face and personage of a wondrous man.

Marlowe only, and he only by means of his fine genius, has ever exalted to real grandeur the vulgar lust of temporal power, until it becomes "like his desire, lift upwards and divine." He sets forth Tamburlaine's aspirations for sovereignty over his fellow-men in these terms :

The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown,
That caused the eldest son of heavenly Ops
To thrust his doting father from his chair,
And place himself in the imperial heaven,
Moved me to manage arms against thy state.
What better precedent than mighty Jove ?
Nature, that framed us of four elements,
Warring within our breasts for regiment,
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds.

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Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous Architecture of the world,
And measure every wandering planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless Spheres,
Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest.

It would appear as if an unintended rhapsody of poetic splendour had been inserted into one of Tamburlaine's speeches of "high astounding terms." That Marlowe did intend to give a glorification of sovereignty, as accordant with the character of Tamburlaine, is confirmed by other similar passages in the play : in answer to the hero's question, "Is it not passing brave to be a king?" the complaisant Theridamas replies :

A god is not so glorious as a king.
I think the pleasure they enjoy in heaven,
Cannot compare with kingly joys on earth,
To wear a crown, enchased with pearl and gold,
Whose virtues carry with it life and death ;
To ask and have ; command and be obeyed ;
When looks breed love ; with looks to gain the
prize :
Such power attractive shines in princes' eyes.

But, arising out of this lust for rule, the poet contrives to express his own aspirations in various autobiographical revelations, such as this :

Shall we wish for aught
The world affords in greatest novelty
And rest attemptless ?

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And writes these magnificent words, quite foreign to Tamburlaine's character, in answer to his own mental query, "What is Beauty?"

If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feelings of their masters' thoughts,
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
Their minds, and muses on admired themes ;
If all the heavenly Quintessence they still ¹
From their immortal flowers of Poesy,
Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
The highest reaches of a human wit ; ²
If these had made one poem's period,
And all combined in Beauty's worthiness,
Yet should there hover in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, at the least,
Which into words no virtue can digest.

Well might Swinburne style these immortal lines "one of the noblest passages, perhaps, indeed, the noblest, in the literature of the world, ever written by one of the greatest masters of poetry, in loving praise of the glorious delights and sublime submission to the everlasting limits of his art."

This first drama of the young Cantab is, indeed, beset with passages replete with beauty, although frequently their splendour is marred by some poor or unrhythmic line. Often the Scythian shepherd's overweening self-confidence causes his ambitious language to become truly great by its very intensity : it is too splendid to be bombastic. His address to Theridamas, when seeking to win him to his side, is characteristic :

¹ Distil,

² Genius.

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I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,
And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about :
And sooner shall the Sun fall from his sphere,
Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome.
Draw forth thy sword, thou mighty man at arms,
Intending but to rase my charmed skin,
And Jove himself will stretch his hand from heaven
To ward the blow and shield me safe from harm.
See how he rains down heaps of gold in showers,
As if he meant to give my soldiers pay !
And, as a sure and grounded argument
That I shall be the Monarch of the East,
He sends this Souldan's daughter rich and brave,
To be my Queen.

And again :

But since they measure our deserts so mean,
That in conceit bear empires on our spears,
Affecting thoughts coequal with the clouds.

And :

For Fates and Oracles of heaven have sworn
To royalise the deeds of Tamburlaine,
And make them blest that share in his attempts.
And doubt you not but, if you favour me,
And let my Fortunes and my valour sway
To some direction in your martiall deeds,
The world will strive with hosts of men at arms
To swarm unto the Ensign I support.
The host of Xerxes, which by fame is said
To drink the mighty Parthian Araris,
Was but a handful to that we will have.
Our quivering lances, shaking in the air,
And bullets, like Jove's dreadful thunderbolts,
Enrolled in flames and fiery smouldering mists,

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Shall threat the Gods more than Cyclopean wars.
And with our sun-bright armour, as we march,
We'll chase the stars from heaven, and dim their
eyes

That stand and muse at our admired arms.

The anachronisms and absurdities of the play, such as the Scythians using bullets, and their leader invoking or referring to Jove's deeds, are not due to the ignorance of Marlowe, but rather to his desire to astound and astonish the audience with his learning. It was the stock-in-trade of contemporary dramatic writers, this display of universal knowledge.

A still more grandiose speech of Tamburlaine, to the Souldan of Egypt, may be quoted :

The god of war resigns his room to me,
Meaning to make me General of the world.
Jove, viewing me in arms, looks pale and wan,
Fearing my power should pull him from his throne.
Where'er I come the fatal sisters sweat,
And grisly Death, by running to and fro,
To do their ceaseless homage to my sword.
And here in Afric, where it seldom rains,
Since I arrived with my triumphant host,
Have swelling clouds, drawn from wide gasping
wounds,
Been oft resolved in bloody purple showers,
A meteor that might terrify the earth,
And make it quake at every drop it drinks.
Millions of souls sit on the banks of Styx,
Waiting the back return of Charon's boat.
Hell and Elysium swarm with ghosts of men
That I have sent from sundry foughten fields
To spread my fame through hell and up to heaven.

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A passage oft quoted by Marlowe's contemporaries, descriptive of his hero's inexorable will and sanguinary temperament, and which appears to have some historic foundation for its assertions, is this :

The first day when he pitcheth down his tents,
White is their hue, and on his silver crest
A snowy Feather spangled white he bears,
To signify the mildness of his mind
That, satiate with spoil, refuseth blood.
But when Aurora mounts the second time,
As red as scarlet is his furniture ;
Then must his kindled wrath be quenched with
blood,
Not sparing any that can manage arms.
But if these threats move not submission,
Black are his colours, black [his ?] pavilion ;
His spear, his shield, his horse, his armour, plumes,
And jetty feathers, menace death and hell ;
Without respect of sex, degree, or age,
He razeth all his foes with fire and sword.

And, according to history and this drama, nothing ever could divert Tamburlaine's will from this terrible decision. It would almost appear as if this monstrous tyrant, whose triumphant path of bloodthirsty conquest extended over a large portion of the known world, was really possessed by some such mad belief as expressed in this drama, that he was intended for " the Scourge and Wrath of God," to terrify and chastise the human race.

Although " Tamburlaine " is described as a succession of detached scenes, unconnected by

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any plot, a certain amount of human interest is imparted to it by the introduction of the Scythian's love for Zenocrate. This portion of the drama is entirely due to Marlowe's invention : naturally, he felt that the total absence of a leading female character would be detrimental to the success of his play, and therefore invented this love story for it. Tamburlaine had captured the fair Zenocrate, daughter to the Souldan of Egypt, as she was on her way home from Medea, and, falling in love with her at first sight, was obdurate to her prayers to be let go her way, and despised the idea of ransom. He asks, " Disdains Zenocrate to live with me ? " and addresses one of his customary impassioned speeches :

Zenocrate, lovelier than the love of Jove,
Brighter than is the silver Rhodope,
Fairer than whitest snow on Scythian hills,
Thy person is more worth to Tamburlaine
Than the possession of the Persian crown,
Which gracious stars have promised at my birth.
A hundred Tartars shall attend on thee,
Mounted on steeds swifter than Pegasus.
Thy garments shall be made of Medean silk,
Enchased with precious jewels of mine own,
More rich and valurous [valuable] than Zenocrate's.
With milk white Harts upon an ivory sled
Thou shalt be drawn ;

with other words of equal worth, to the captured princess, his oration ending with the more natural offer of himself as her consort.

In the course of time Zenocrate learns to love her capturer, and seems contented with her lot

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until Tamburlaine invades her father's kingdom of Egypt, and declines her persistent prayers to show mercy to her countrymen. Her grief somewhat disturbs the hard heart of "The Scourge of God," and he soliloquizes thus :

Ah, fair Zenocrate ! divine Zenocrate !
Fair is too foul an epithet for thee,
That in thy passion for thy country's love,
And fear to see thy kingly Father's harm,
With hair dishevelled wip'st thy watery cheeks ;
And like to Flora in her morning's pride,
Shaking her silver tresses in the air,
Rain'st on the earth resolved pearls in showers,
And sprinklest sapphires on thy shining face,
Where Beauty, mother to the Muses, sits
And comments volumes with her ivory pen,
Taking instructions from thy flowing eyes,
Eyes which, when that Ebona steps to heaven,
In silence of thy solemn evening's walk,
Making the mantle of the richest night, . . .
There angels in their crystal armour fight
A doubtful battle with my tempted thoughts
For Egypt's freedom and the Souldan's life,
His life that so consumes Zenocrate ;
Whose sorrows lay more siege unto my soul
Than all my army to Damascus walls ;
And neither Persia's sovereign nor the Turk
Troubled my senses with conceit of foyle
So much, by much, as doth Zenocrate.

But how unseemly is it for my Sex,
My discipline of arms and chivalry,
My nature, and the terror of my name,
To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint !

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I thus conceiving and subduing both,
That which hath stooped the chiefest of the Gods,
Even from the fiery spangled veil of heaven,
To feel the lovely warmth of shepherd's flames,
And mask in cottages of strowed reeds,
Shall give the world to note for all my birth,
That Virtue solely is the sum of glory,
And fashions men with true nobility.

Subsequently Tamburlaine spares the Souldan of Egypt for his daughter's sake, and with his marriage to "divine Zenocrate" the drama ends.

III

THE second part of "Tamburlaine," "with his impassionate fury for the death of his lady and love, faire Zenocrate," displays evidence of the haste with which it was written. Plot it has none, and, although more subdued in language than the first drama, such incident as there is is still less real or reasonable.

The play opens with a conference between the Turks and Christians, in order that they may discuss the terms of peace. The Hungarian king, Sigismond, who has to treat with the Turkish monarch, Orcanes, "of friendly peace or deadly war," says :

Take which thou wilt, for as the Romans used,
I here present thee with a naked sword.
Wilt thou have war, then shake this blade at me'

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If peace, restore it to my hands again,
And I will sheath it, to confirm the same.

Orcanes proudly answers :

Stay, Sigismond ! Forget'st thou I am he,
That with the Cannon shook Vienna's walls
And made it dance upon the Continent,
As when the massy substance of the Earth
Quivers about the Axletree of heaven ?
Forget'st thou that I sent a shower of darts,
Mingled with powdered shot and feathered steel,
So thick upon the blink-eyed Burghers' heads,
That thou thyself, then County-Palatine,
The King of Boheme, and the Austrian Duke,
Sent heralds out, which basely on their knees,
In all your names, desired a truce of me ?
Forget'st thou that, to have me raise my siege,
Wagons of gold were set before my tent,
Stamped with the princely Fowl ¹ that in her wings
Carries the fearful thunderbolts of Jove ?
How canst thou think of this and offer war ?

Sigismond retorts, and peace looks as far off as ever, until the allies interfere and patch up a truce, the Christian leader swearing by Him who made the world, and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to keep the peace inviolable whilst he lives, and further promises should Natolia be invaded he will send one hundred thousand horsemen to aid repel them ; to which Orcanes, who has sworn " by sacred Mahomet, the friend of God," also to keep the truce inviolate, answers :

¹ The double-headed eagle.

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I thank thee, Sigismond ; but when I war,
All Asia Minor, Africa, and Greece,
Follow my standard,

and, thereupon, sends his forces home "to stay my coming against proud Tamburlaine."

This truce and its speedy rupture by the Christian allies, as soon as Natolia is denuded of troops, is noteworthy, as cited by Marlowe, or rather his dramatic puppets, to prove how lightly Christians break their most solemn oaths. At first Sigismond does venture to suggest "This should be treachery, and violence against the grace of our profession," but his allies assure him:

With such Infidels,
In whom no faith or true religion rests,
We are not bound to those accomplishments
The holy laws of Christendom injoin.

So what we vow to them, should not infringe
Our liberty of arms and victory.

Such arguments quite satisfy his Christian majesty, and he at once prepares to smite his recent host suddenly, and "take the victory our God hath given." Intelligence of this treachery being brought to Orcanes, naturally he breaks out into invectives against the Christian allies, exclaiming :

Can there be such deceit in Christians,
Or treason in the fleshly heart of man,
Whose shape is figure of the highest God ?
Then, if there be a Christ, as Christians say,

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If he be jealous of his name and honour
As is our holy prophet Mahomet,
Take here these papers as our sacrifice
And witness to thy servants' perjury !
Open, thou shining veil of Cynthia,
And make a passage from the imperial heaven,
That he that sits on high and never sleeps,
Nor in one place is circumscribable,
But everywhere fills every Continent
With strange infusion of his sacred vigor,
May in his endless power and purity
Behold and venge this Traitor's perjury !

The Christian allies are utterly defeated, and Orcanes asks one of his compatriots whether their discomfiture is not due to the power of Christ. He answers : " It is but the fortune of the wars, my Lord, whose power is often proved a miracle "—a belief good enough for a pagan, but somewhat dangerous for an English audience in the days of Queen Elizabeth.

The action of the play now reverts to Tamburlaine, who is sitting by the bedside of his beloved consort, Zenocrate, direly ill, surrounded by physicians, courtiers, and her three sons. This occasion causes the Scythian warrior to burst forth with one of his poetic harangues :

Black is the beauty of the brightest day ;
The golden ball of heaven's eternal fire,
That danced with glory on the silver waves,
Now wants the fuel that inflamed his beams ;
And all with faintness and for foul disgrace
He binds his temples with a frowning cloud,
Ready to darken earth with endless night.

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Zenocrate, that gave him light and life,

Now, by the malice of the angry skies,
Whose jealousy admits no second mate,
Draws in the comfort of her latest breath,
All dazzled with the hellish mists of death.

Now walk the angels on the wall of heaven,
As sentinels to warn th' immortal souls
To entertain divine Zenocrate.

Apollo, Cynthia, and the ceaseless lamps,
That gently looked upon this loathsome earth,
Shine downwards now no more, but deck the
heavens,
To entertain divine Zenocrate.

The crystal springs, whose taste illuminates
Refined eyes with an eternal sight,
Like tried silver runs through Paradise,
To entertain divine Zenocrate.

The Cherubims and holy Seraphims,
That sing and play before the King of Kings
Use all their voices and their instruments
To entertain divine Zenocrate.

And in this sweet and curious harmony,
The god that tunes this music to our souls
Holds out his hand in highest majesty
To entertain divine Zenocrate.

Then let some holy trance convey my thoughts
Up to the palace of th' imperial heaven,
That this my life may be as short to me
As are the days of sweet Zenocrate.

A speech from Zenocrate and another oration
from Tamburlaine, chiefly remarkable as con-

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taining a forecast of a splendid passage in Marlowe's later drama of "Faustus," follow. The husband's lamentations include these lines :

Her sacred beauty hath enchanted heaven ;
And had she lived before the siege of Troy,
Helen, whose beauty summoned Greece to arms,
And drew a thousand ships to Tenedos,
Had not been named in Homer's Iliads :
Her name had been in every line he wrote.

Zenocrate dies, and Tamburlaine rants through several lines, being, as he owns, "raving, impatient, desperate and mad." Reproved by his faithful follower and friend, Theridamas, he utters the most human and pathetic sentence of his dramatic career :

Say no more !
Though she be dead, yet *let me think she lives*.

Tamburlaine now undertakes to teach his three sons the rudiments of warfare, and after a lengthy speech, impressing upon them the hardships they must endure and dangers they must pass through, concludes :

When this is done, then are ye soldiers,
And worthy sons of Tamburlaine the Great.

One of these lads, Calyphas, who does not partake the martial ardour of his father and his brothers, suggests, "this is dangerous to be done ; we may be slain or wounded ere we learn." The infuriated father inveighs against

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the "coward," and to teach the paltry nature of a wound cuts his arm, saying :

Come, boys, and with your fingers search my wound,
And in my blood wash all your hands at once,
While I sit smiling to behold the sight.
Now, my boys, what think you of a wound ?

Calyphas "thinks 'tis a pityful sight," but his two brothers deem it a trifle, and one asks his father to cut his bravely, "as you did your own." This Calyphas appears again in a later scene ; and is one of the most successfully drawn of Marlowe's characters. He probably gave Shakespeare some hints for his creation of Falstaff. When his two brothers summon him from his tent to fight the attacking foe, Calyphas retorts :

Away, ye fools ! my father needs not me,
Nor you, in faith, but that you will be thought
More childish valorous than manly wise.
If half our camp should sit and sleep with me,
My father were enough to scare the foe.
You do dishonour to his majesty,
To think our helps will do him any good.

I know, sir, what it is to kill a man,
It works remorse of conscience in me.
I take no pleasure to be murderous,
Nor care for blood when wine will quench my thirst.

His brother, Celebinus, exclaims :

O cowardly boy ! fie, for shame, come forth !
Thou dost dishonor manhood and thy house ;

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to which Calyphas responds :

Go, go, tall stripling, fight you for us both,
And take my other toward brother here,
For person like to prove a second Mars.
'Twill please my mind as well to hear both you
Have won a heap of honor in the field,
And left your slender carcasses behind,
As if I lay with you for company.

When told by his elder brother Amyras he would not for untold possessions risk his father's fury when he finds Calyphas has had no share in the day's honours, the cowardly lad answers :

Take your honor, I will take my ease ;
My wisdom shall excuse my cowardice.
I go into the field before I need !
The bullets fly at random where they list ;
And should I go and kill a thousand men,
I were as soon rewarded with a shot,
And sooner far than he that never fights ;
And should I go and do nor harm nor good,
I might have harm which all the good I have,
Joined with my father's crown, would never cure.

When Tamburlaine enters, flushed with fresh victories, to find his son Calyphas had kept out of the fighting, he stabs him to death, notwithstanding the entreaties of his sons and generals, declaring :

These terrors and these tyrannies . . .
I excute, enjoined me from above,
To scourge the pride of such as heaven abhors :
Nor am I made Archmonarch of the world,

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Crowned and invested by the hand of Jove,
For deeds of bounty or nobility.
But since I exercise a greater name,
The Scourge of God and terror of the world,
I must apply myself to fit those terms,
In war, in blood, in death, in cruelty,
And plague such Pesants [*sic*] as resist in me
The power of heaven's eternal majesty.

In a subsequent scene Tamburlaine, who after his wife's death is made by Marlowe, perhaps unconsciously, to act like a madman, has captive kings harnessed to his chariot and compelled to drag him across the stage. This scene, one of the best known and most frequently referred to of the Elizabethan drama, was continually parodied by the poet's contemporaries, Shakespeare amongst them. In the play Tamburlaine, flourishing his whip above the kings, exclaims :

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia !
What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day,
And have so proud a chariot at your heels,
And such a Coachman as great Tamburlaine ?

Later on he bids these jades, kings of greatest Asia, to crouch and tremble when they hear his scourge,

That whips down cities and controlleth crowns,
Adding their wealth and treasure to my store.

.
the martial spoils

We will convey with us to Persia.

Then shall my native city Samarcanda, . . .

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The pride and beauty of her princely seat
Be famous through the furthest continents ;
For there my palace royal shall be placed,
Whose shining turrets shall dismay the heavens,
And cast the fame of Ilion's Tower to hell.
Thorough the streets, with troops of conquered
kings,

I'll ride in golden armour like the Sun,
And in my helm a triple plume shall spring,
Spangled with diamonds, dancing in the air,
To note me Emperor of the threefold world.

Then in my coach, like Saturn's royal son
Mounted his shining chariot gilt with fire,
And drawn with princely Eagles through the path,
Paved with bright christal, and enchased with stars,
When all the gods stand gazing at his pomp,
So will I ride through Samarcanda streets,
Until my soul, dissevered from this flesh,
Shall mount the milk-white way, and meet him
there.

Speeches of the braggadocio type growing more and more bombastic, and deeds, if possible, still more terrible than before, emanate from Tamburlaine. He utters threats against the most sacred personages of various faiths, yet it is noteworthy that he continually acknowledges his belief in one omnipotent Deity, as if to prove that, doubtful or decided as his mind might be about the tenets of Christianity, or any other creed, on this one point he is steadfast. Satisfied that Mahomet is no deity, he orders the Koran to be burnt, "and all the heaps of superstitious books," and declares :

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There is a God, full of revenging wrath,
From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks,
Whose Scourge I am, and him will I obey.

The books are burnt, and he proceeds :

Now, Mahomet, if thou have any power,
Come down thyself, and work a miracle.
Thou art not worthy to be worshipped
That suffers flames of fire to burn the writ
Wherein the sum of thy religion rests.

Or vengeance on the head of Tamburlaine
That shakes his sword against thy majesty,
And spurns the abstracts of thy foolish laws ?
Well, soldiers, Mahomet remains in hell ;
He cannot hear the voice of Tamburlaine.
Seek out another Godhead to adore,
The God that sits in heaven, if any God ;
For He is God alone, and none but He.

Of course, similar arguments might have been urged against Christianity and its scriptures ; but even Marlowe, if indeed he thought such things, could scarcely dare say so. Directly after this harangue, as if to punish him for his daring irreligious language, Tamburlaine feels himself " distempered," yet exclaims :

But, forth, ye vassals ! whatso ere it be,
Sickness or death can never conquer me !

He soon discovers that his boasting is valueless: that his time is short, and he must die :

See, where my slave, the ugly monster Death,
Shaking and quivering, pale and wan for fear,

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Stands aiming at me with his murdering dart,
Who flies away at every glance I give,
And, when I look away, comes stealing on !

Look, where he goes ! but see, he comes again,
Because I stay ! Techelles, let us march,
And weary Death with bearing souls to hell.

Feeling that his end is at hand, Tamburlaine reassumes his reason and directs his sons to finish the subjugation of the world. He explains the extent of his conquests, and amongst other noteworthy matter says :

Not far from Alexandria,
Whereas the Terren and the Red Sea meet, . . .
I meant to cut a channel to them both,
That men might quickly sail to India.

See, what a world of ground
Lies westward from the midst of Cancer's line
Unto the rising of this earthly globe,
Whereas the Sun declining from our sight,
Begins the day with our Antipodes !
And shall I die, and this unconquered ? . . .
And from th' Antarctic Pole eastward behold
As much more land, which never was descried. . . .
And shall I die, and this unconquered ?

Expressing the hope that, though he die, his spirit shall live in his sons, he has Amyras, the elder, crowned ; then, ordering " the hearse of fair Zenocrate " to be brought to his side, to serve as part of his funeral, he resigns himself to death.

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Much as there might be found in "Tamburlaine" to sneer or jeer at, and although it frequently steers very near the boundary line which divides the ridiculous from the sublime, it must still be regarded as the grandest and most poetic drama yet produced in England. As Dyce says, with all its faults it was "undoubtedly superior to all the English tragedies which preceded it; superior to them in the effectiveness with which the events are brought out, in the poetic feeling which animates the whole, and in the verve and variety of the versification. . . . Not a few passages might be gleaned from 'Tamburlaine' as grand in thought, as splendid in imagery, and as happy in expression as any which his later works contain." And William Bosworth, who lived near enough to the author's times to appreciate his praise, in his "Chaste and Lost Lovers," said of Marlowe's "mighty lines": "Mr. Benjamin Jonson, a man sensible enough of his own abilities, was often heard to say, they were examples fitter for admiration than for parallel."

It must be admitted that the popularity of "Tamburlaine" was greatly due to the impersonation of the leading character by Edward Alleyn, the most famous actor of the age, and the chief favourite of playgoers of the period. Having served his apprenticeship to the stage and shown by his genius that he was fitted for a leading part, Alleyn found his opportunity in Marlowe's drama. His grand presentation of

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the "Scythian shepherd" captivated his audience and enhanced the author's reputation as well as his own. The announcement, on the rough theatrical play-bills of the time, that either Alleyn would act, or that a play by Marlowe would be presented, was sufficient to attract a goodly audience.

Alleyn, born in 1566, was only about one or two-and-twenty when he appeared in "Tamburlaine." He was of handsome presence, and his elocutionary powers placed him above all rivals, so that Thomas Heywood, a capable critic, when he was referring to Marlowe as "the best of poets in that age," stated that Alleyn had "won the attribute of peerless." Ben Jonson—not only noted for his own elocutionary attainments but the last to flatter—after comparing Alleyn, to his favour, with the great actors of Rome, says of him :

Who both thy graces in thyself hast more
Outstript, than they did all that went before ;
And present worth in all dost so contract,
As others speak, but only thou dost act.
Wear this renown ; 'tis just, that who did give
So many Poets life, by one should live.

The stage management did all it could to make Alleyn's appearance accordant with the grandeur of the personage he represented. The costumes provided for him in "Tamburlaine" were as gorgeous as the times could provide, and were calculated to excite the admiration of the audience. In Henslowe's (the stage pro-

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prietor's) "Diary" is recorded how much was paid for the hero's crimson velvet breeches and his copper-laced coat, as well as for the bridle for the harnessed kings. Compared with the value of money in those days, the sums expended for the actor's attire appear most exorbitant. Seven pounds were paid for a gown and nineteen for a cloak; and as much was given for the heroine's gown in "The Woman Killed by Kindness" as was paid to Thomas Heywood for writing the play. Ben Jonson told Drummond of Hawthornden that he had not gained two hundred pounds for all the plays he had written, and Henslowe in his "Diary" shows that the highest price he ever paid an author for his drama was the eleven pounds he paid Jonson and Dekker for "Page of Plymouth," a murder tragedy. These facts explain why it was that whilst players and theatre-proprietors became wealthy, the authors of their dramas died in penury. No wonder then that so popular a writer as Marlowe should lament:

Learning . . .

And Poverty should always kiss;

And to this day is every scholar poor:

Gross gold from them runs headlong to the boor.

It is worthy of notice that Marlowe never stooped to stuff his plays with obscene puns or pander to the public taste with double meanings; although he made use of words which, nowadays, are regarded as coarse or vulgar, yet in those times were regarded with equanimity by all

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classes. What Jones, the printer of "Tamburlaine," said about the "frivolous jestures," generally admixed with obscenity, could not but portray Marlowe's own feelings on the subject.

IV

VARIOUS matters now occurred to mar the pleasure Marlowe must have experienced at the success of his drama. For not only did its success bring him friends, but also it made him the usual enemies. A contemporary writer, whose own plays failed to attain any popularity, was taken with an intense hatred of the author of "Tamburlaine," and poured out upon him the vials of his envy, hatred, and malice. There is no evidence that he had any personal knowledge of Marlowe, save that in a posthumous tract, which had been largely revised by its editor, Greene was made to style him a "quondam acquaintance." Greene, who was a social outcast and, according to his own confessions, a mean scamp, pursued Marlowe from year to year with unrelenting hatred. In 1588, in an epistle prefixed to his "Perimedes," Greene said a play of his had been scorned because, unlike certain "gentleman poets," "I could not make my verses jet upon the stage in tragical buskins, every word filling the mouth like a far-burden of Bow-bells, daring God out of heaven with that atheist Tamburlaine . . . such mad and scoffing poets

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that have poetical spirits, as bred of Merlin's race, if there be any in England, that set the end of scholarism in an English blank-verse," and so forth. "Merlin" was a hit at "Marlin," as Marlowe's name was frequently spelt in those days of eccentric orthography. "Scholarism" was a new word used by Marlowe: his blank verse needs no explanation. This was, apparently, the first of Greene's innuendoes. By 1589 he had learnt something of Marlowe's parentage, and in a tale styled "Menaphon" he varied his sneers, and, after a reference to "Tamburlaine," speaks of a "Canterbury tale," told by some "propheticall full mouth that as he were a Cobbler's eldest sonne, would by the *laste* tell where another's shoe wrings." In a "Farewell to Folly" he has a further sneer at his popular contemporary, telling his "University Readers," where he deemed the shaft would rankle deepest, that copies of his (Greene's) "Mourning Garment" had so ready a sale that the pedlar "found them too dear for his pack, and was fain to bargain for the life of 'Tamburlaine' to wrap up his sweet powders in those unsavoury papers." As Richard Simpson has pointed out, "In the heyday of Marlowe's success, in 1588-1591, Greene was as jealous of him (Marlowe) as he was of Shakespeare in 1592, and for a similar reason." The atrocious plot this Greene framed later on to jeopardize even the life of his too popular contemporary is too complicated and long a story to enter upon here.

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V

MARLOWE now appeared before the public with a new drama, "Doctor Faustus," which play not only maintained but enhanced his fame. It was, apparently, staged by the company of the Lord High Admiral (Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham) in 1588, although the earliest known reference to its performance is of September 30, 1594, and the first known edition of its publication is dated 1604.

The story upon which "Doctor Faustus" is founded is one of the widest-spread of Europe. There was a John Faust, a native of Germany, whose real adventures and legendary actions had rendered him a noted if not a popular personage. A complete mythology accumulated around the name of Faustus, and any number of marvellous performances were imputed to him, including the transmutation of metals, raising the dead, and other supernatural matters. His ability to execute these wonders was asserted to be due to the assistance of an evil spirit which under various disguises always accompanied him in his travels. He was asserted to have made a compact with the Devil, variously known as Lucifer, Belzebub, and other euphonious designations. By this compact, written with his own blood, Faustus had conveyed the reversion of his soul to the Devil, upon the understanding that for four-and-twenty years he was to enjoy

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all the pleasures this world could provide. In 1587 an anonymous chapbook history of Doctor Faustus was published at Frankfurt, and within its pages were given many of the marvellous incidents which had gathered around the semi-mythical individual. The work had an enormous circulation and was translated into the leading languages of Europe. Many of these early publications perished, and doubtless the earliest English version of the tale ; but, be that as it may, the romance came into the hands of Marlowe, and out of its childish absurdities he fashioned the magnificent drama known as " Doctor Faustus."

As in " Tamburlaine " so in " Faustus " the poet strove to portray one prominent trait of his hero's character, and around that idiosyncrasy to weave his own ideas. In the Scythian warrior he depicted insatiable desire for dominion over the temporalities of the world ; for kingly power and despotic rule ; whilst in " Faustus " he sought still to represent the subjection of the minds of the weaker men by one of stronger mental power, but of power enforced by spiritual instead of physical means. In " Faustus " there is only the shadow of a plot, and as in " Tamburlaine," the tale, if such it may be termed, is unfolded in a series of disconnected scenes, intended to show the gradual subjugation of a pre-eminent mind by the power of evil passions. From the beginning, when the hero considers and finds wanting for the satisfaction of his material desires all the advantages

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offered him by the professions, until the terrible climax, the one main object Faustus has in view is the acquisition of "mind-conquering learning." The deity he trusts to is "scholarism," that definition of scholastic knowledge which Greene twitted him for using. For the acquisition of unbounded knowledge Faustus was, indeed, prepared to risk everything, and thereby became an easy prey for the tempter. "Had I as many souls as there be stars," he asserts, "I'd give them all" for supernatural knowledge.

The ancient Moralities, wherein some virtue or vice was personified, were doubtless in the mind of Marlowe when he conceived and wrought his drama of "Faustus," the grandest impersonation the world had seen of Conscience. He has made the common folk-tale not only a theme for his poetic powers, but an embodiment of man's most spiritual attribute ; for without conscience what would man be but an unregulated machine ?

Although the earliest known edition of "Doctor Faustus" is that of 1604, that of 1616 is regarded by some commentators as of even greater value, as it certainly is a revised, and in some respects improved, version of the drama. Whether the revisions and interpolations are due to any manuscript by Marlowe, or whether to the work of a later hand, perhaps Shakespeare himself, is unknown ; but as the 1616 edition is in parts clearer and in other respects superior, it is advisable to compare them

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when quoting. In both editions the story is introduced by Chorus, who, after stating that neither in martial nor amatory subjects,

Intends our Muse to vaunt his heavenly verse ;

proceeds to relate how Faustus was born of "parents base of stock" in Germany, within a town called Rhodes. In riper years he went to Wittenberg, where his kinsmen brought him up. He worked so well in Divinity that he was graced with the title of Doctor, and could excel all in theological disputations, until he grew so in self-conceit that he resorted to the study of forbidden things :

And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,
He surfeits upon cursed Necromancy.

Nothing so sweet as Magic is to him. . . .

And this the man that in his study sits.

Faustus is accordingly seen in his study soliloquizing over the prospects offered by the different learned professions. After having considered Divinity, Medicine, and Jurisprudence, and found none of them satisfactory from his points of view, he decides to forego them all and give himself up to Necromancy. The next step is to invite his two friends, Valdes and Cornelius, known for their study of Magic, to visit him.

Now enter upon the scene a Good and an Evil Angel, and alternatively sway the mind of Faustus by their counsel. From time to time, during the progress of the drama, these two

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spirits appear, and as the promptings of conscience, which they evidently typify, they strive for the mortal's soul. The good spirit always succumbs to the evil, and ultimately leaves Faustus to his fate. After their first visit he ponders over their suggestions, and, charmed by the promises of the malevolent phantom to invest him with power over the terrestrial and celestial elements, he exclaims :

How am I gutted with conceit of this !
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please ?
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will ?

I'll have them read me strange Philosophy,
And tell the secrets of all foreign Kings ;
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg ;
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk,
Wherewith the Students shall be bravely clad ;
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma from our land,
And reign sole King of all our Provinces ;
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp bridge,
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.

His acquaintances Valdes and Cornelius now enter, and are informed by him that he is dissatisfied with the prospects offered by the professions :

Philosophy is odious and obscure :
Both Law and Physic are for petty wits ;

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Divinity is basest of the three,
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible and vile.
'Tis Magic, Magic, that hath ravished me.
Then, gentle friends, aid me in this attempt,
And I . . .

Will be as cunning as Agrippa was,
Whose shadows made all Europe honour him.

Valdes assures him :

Faustus, thy books, thy wit, and our experience
Shall make all nations to canonize us.
As Indian Moors obey their Spanish Lords,
So shall the spirits of every element
Be always serviceable to us three ;
Like lions shall they guard us when we please,
Like German Rutters¹ with their horsemen's staves,
Or Lapland giants, trotting by our sides ;
Sometimes like women, or unwedded maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows,
Than has [*sic*] the white breasts of the Queen of Love.

If learnèd Faustus will be resolute.

Faustus declares he is as resolute "as thou to live," whereupon Cornelius assures him :

The miracles that magic will perform,
Will make thee vow to study nothing else.

Faustus is determined to act upon their suggestions and his own desires, and asserts :

For ere I sleep I'll try what I can do ;
This night I'll conjure, tho' I die therefore.

The next scene is given up to foolish word-playing between Wagner, the attendant of

¹ Cavalry.

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Faustus, and some scholars, and as 'clownage' has no real connexion with the drama.

During the night Faustus begins his conjuring, and ultimately is visited by Mephistophilis, an evil spirit, who asks him what he would have, and is told :

I charge thee wait upon me whilst I live,
To do whatever Faustus shall command ;

but Mephistophilis replies :

I am a servant of the great Lucifer,
And may not follow thee without his leave ;
No more than he commands must we perform.

Faustus asks whether it was not his conjuring that brought his visitor, but Mephistophilis answers :

That was the cause, but yet *per accidens* :
For when we hear one rack the name of Góð,
Abjure the Scriptures, and his Saviour Christ,
We fly in hope to get his glorious soul.

Faustus is anxious to discuss more important matters than "these vain trifles of men's souls," and asks, "What is that Lucifer, thy lord ?" Whereupon this suggestive dialogue follows :

Meph. Arch-regent and Commander of all Spirits.

Faust. Was not that Lucifer an Angel once ?

Meph. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly loved of God.

Faust. How comes it then that he is Prince of Devils ?

Meph. O, by aspiring pride and insolence ;
For which God threw him from the face of Heaven.

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Faust. And what are you that live with Lucifer ?

Meph. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
Conspired against our God with Lucifer,
And are for ever damned with Lucifer.

Faust. Where are you damned ?

Meph. In Hell.

Faust. How comes it then that thou art out of
Hell ?

Meph. Why this is Hell, nor am I out of it.
Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand Hells,
In being deprived of everlasting bliss ?
O Faustus ! leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.

These words wrung from the tortured spirit do not dismay the ambitious scholar, who bids Mephistophilis learn manly fortitude from him "and scorn those joys thou never shalt possess." He commands him to carry the tidings to Lucifer that Faustus will surrender to him his soul :

So he will spare him four and twenty years,
Letting him live in all voluptuousness,
Having thee ever to attend on me,
To give me whatsoever I shall ask ;
To tell me whatsoever I demand ;
To slay mine enemies, and to aid my friends,
And always be obedient to my will.

When Mephistophilis has departed on his mission, Faustus reflects :

Must thou needs be damned, can'st thou not be
saved ?

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Why waverest thou ? O something soundeth in
mine ear,

“ Abjure this Magic, turn to God again.”

To God ? Why he loves thee not !

The God thou servest is thine own appetite.

Again do his two attendant spirits of good and evil approach, the one to confirm his wilfulness and the other to draw him to repentance. He is too far gone for contrition, and invokes Mephistophilis to give him tidings from great Lucifer. He is informed that Lucifer demands a formal deed of surrender of his soul, and unless Faustus executes that Mephistophilis must leave him. Faustus is quite prepared to go through this melodramatic ceremony, evidently intended as a concession to the groundlings ; stabs his arm, as directed, and with the blood thus obtained signs a deed of gift of his soul to the “ Arch-regent of all spirits,” on condition that Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance ; shall have Mephistophilis in attendance always to do what he may require of him and procure him all he wants for the space of four-and-twenty years, at the expiration of which time full power is granted to Lucifer to carry Faustus off, body and soul.

Matters being thus settled, Mephistophilis is ready to answer any questions Faustus may wish to ask :

Faust. First, I will question thee about Hell.

Tell me, where is the place that men call Hell ?

Meph. Under the Heavens.

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Faust. Aye, so are all things else ; but whereabouts ?

Meph. Where we are tortured and remain for ever.
Hell hath no limit, nor is circumscribed
In one self place ; for where we are is Hell,
And where Hell is there must we ever be :
And, to conclude, when all the world dissolves,
And every creature shall be purified,
All places shall be Hell that is not Heaven.

Faust. Come, I think Hell's a fable.

Meph. Aye, think so still, till experience change thy mind.

Faust. Why, think'st thou then that Faustus shall be damned ?

Meph. Aye, of necessity, for here's the scroll
Wherein thou hast given thy soul to Lucifer.

Faust. Aye, and body too ; but what of that ?
Think'st thou that Faustus is so fond to imagine
That, after this life, there is any pain ?
Tush ; these are trifles and mere old wives' tales.

Meph. But, Faustus, I am an instance to prove the contrary,
For I am damned, and am now in Hell.

Faust. How ! now in Hell ?
Nay, an this be Hell, I'll willingly be damned here.
What ? sleeping, eating, walking and disputing !

As Faustus is ever ready to repent, to occupy his restless mind Mephistophilis conjures up sights interesting even to the scholar's palled imagination, for, as he confesses :

Long ere this I should have slain myself,
Had not sweet pleasure conquered deep despair.
Have I not made blind Homer sing to me

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Of Alexander's love and Ænon's death ?
And hath not he that built the walls of Thebes
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
Made music with my Mephistophilis ?
Why should I die, or basely despair ?
I am resolved, Faustus shall not repent.
Come, Mephistophilis, let us dispute again
And reason of divine Astrology.

Faustus questions his familiar spirit about many astronomical subjects, and Mephistophilis answers in accordance with the general ideas of the time. The doctor tells him that these are but trivial matters which even Wagner, his servant, could reply to : they are but " Freshmen's questions." Faustus now ventures upon forbidden themes and asks, " Now tell me, who made the world ? " " I will not," is the answer. Faustus presses for a reply, saying, " Have not I bound thee to tell me anything ? " " Yes, that is not against our kingdom," responds Mephistophilis. " Think thou of Hell." " Think," exclaims Faustus, " upon God that made the world "; and cries bitterly, " Is't not too late ? "

The two angels, who always appear when Faustus manifests signs of repentance, alternatively endeavour to sway his wavering mind, and this time the distressed man beseeches his Saviour to save his soul.

Lucifer with his companion spirits enters, and says :

Christ cannot save thy soul for He is just.
There's none but I have interest in the same ;

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and the conclusion is that Faustus craves pardon, and vows never again to look to Heaven. Lucifer, in reward for the lost man's contrition, agrees to show him some pastime. Says Belzebub, a companion prince in hell, "Thou shalt behold the Seven Deadly Sins appear." Thereupon follows an interlude, which does not display any of Marlowe's genius, and is apparently one of the stock items kept in reserve for the edification of those who demand an exhibition of 'clownage.' The immense popularity of "Doctor Faustus," and the introduction in the drama of so many of the personages who had appeared in the not yet forgotten "Mysteries" and "Moralities" of the past, compelled the management to accompany their reappearance with the buffoonery which had always been a part of their performance.

There is no need to reproduce here any of these foolings, especially as there is little reason to believe they were by Marlowe. The magical performances of Faustus at the Papal Court and at the courts of the Emperor of Germany and of the Duke of Vanholt are not only full of "frivolous jestures" "unmeet for the matter," but differ so widely in the two editions of 1604 and 1616 that it is advisable to ignore them here. The only excerpt desirable is a short rhymed invocation made by Mephistophilis, contained in the 1616 edition but absent in the earlier publication of 1604 :

Whilst on thy head I lay my hand,
And charm thee with this magic wand.

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First wear this girdle, then appear
Invisible to all are here :
The Planets seven, the gloomy air,
Hell and the Furies' forked hair,
Pluto's blue fire, and Hecat's tree,
With magic spells so compass thee,
That no eye may thy body see.

Also, the Emperor's desire to see the apparitions of his ancestors is a noteworthy passage, almost lost sight of amid the common conjuring rubbish Faustus displays for the admiration of the pit :

Emperor. Then doctor Faustus, mark what I shall say.

As I was sometime solitary set
Within my closet, sundry thoughts arose
About the honour of mine ancestors ;
How they had won by prowess such exploits,
Got such riches, subdued so many kingdoms,
As we that do succeed, or they that shall
Hereafter possess our throne, shall
(I fear me) never attain to that degree
Of high renown and great authority,
Amongst which kings is Alexander the Great,
Chief spectacle of the world's pre-eminence,
The bright shining of whose glorious acts
Lightens the world with his reflecting beams,
As when I hear but motion made of him,
It grieves my soul I never saw the man.
If, therefore, thou, by cunning of thine art,
Can'st raise this man from hollow vaults below,
Where lies entombed this famous conqueror,
And bring with him his beauteous paramour,
Both in their right shapes, gesture, and attire

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They used to wear during their time of life,
Thou shalt both satisfy my just desire,
And give me cause to praise thee whilst I live.

In response to this request Faustus causes apparitions of "Alexander and his Paramour" to appear before his imperial host, who is so satisfied by the appearance of the two spirits that he deems they must be "the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes."

This episode is told very differently in the later editions, and in better rhythm; but the older form, however corrupt the text and poor the versification, is finely conceived.

Although his time is drawing to a close Faustus now gives himself up to riotous living; called by an old man, in a beautiful exhortation, to repentance, once more the hapless mortal is racked by despair and strives to repent, but is sternly called to account by Mephistophilis. He craves pardon and offers to renew his vow to Lucifer, asking but one more grace, "to glut the longings of my heart's desire," that he may have another interview with the heavenly Helen of Troy. On her appearance he exclaims, in a passage famous wherever English literature is known :

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium ?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss !
Her lips suck forth my soul ; see where it flies !
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.

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I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sacked :
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumèd crest.
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
O thou art fairer than the evening air,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars ;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter,
When he appeared to hapless Semele ;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms,
And none but thou shalt be my paramour !

The last portion of the drama is evidently corrupt : entire scenes, as well as various passages, which appear in one edition are not in the other. The last scene, a terrible one, is some lines shorter in the first edition, and does not lose by its brevity. His friends, the scholars, visit Faustus in his study, and one of them asks, " What ails Faustus ? "

Faust. Ah, my sweet chamber-fellow, had I lived with thee, then had I lived still, but now must die eternally. Look, comes he not ? Comes he not ?

Sec. Schol. What means Faustus ?

Third Schol. He is not well with being over solitary.

First Schol. If it be so we'll have Physicians and Faustus shall be cured, 'tis but a surfeit.

Faust. A surfeit of deadly sin that hath damned both body and soul.

Sec. Schol. Yet, Faustus, look up to Heaven, and remember God's mercies are infinite.

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Faust. But Faustus's offence can never be pardoned. . . . Ah, gentlemen, hear me with patience and tremble not at my speeches. Though my heart pants and quivers to remember that I have been a student here these thirty years, O would I had never seen Wittenberg, never read book. . . . Sweet friends, what shall become of Faustus, being in Hell for ever ?

Third Schol. Yet, Faustus, call on God.

Faust. On God, whom Faustus hath abjured ?
On God, whom Faustus hath blasphemed ?
O my God, I would weep but the Devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood instead of tears, yea life and soul. O he stays my tongue !
I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold, they hold them !

All. Who, Faustus ?

Faust. Lucifer and Mephistophilis. Ah, gentlemen, I gave them my soul for my cunning.

All. God forbid !

Faust. God forbade it indeed, but Faustus hath done it. For the vain pleasure of twenty-four years hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity . . . the date hath expired.

.
Gentlemen, away, lest you perish with me.

Sec. Schol. O what shall we do to save Faustus ?

Faust. Talk not of me, but save yourselves and depart.

Third Schol. God will strengthen me, I will stay with Faustus.

First Schol. Tempt not God, sweet friend, but let us into the next room, and there pray for him.

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Faust. Ay, pray for me, pray for me, and what noise soever you hear, come not unto me, for nothing can rescue me.

Sec. Schol. Pray thou, and we will pray that God may have mercy upon thee.

Faust. Gentlemen, farewell : if I live till morning I'll visit you : if not, Faustus is gone to Hell.

All. Faustus, farewell.

In the 1616 edition the Good and Evil Angels now enter for the last time, but their discourse serves no purpose. The alternative appearance of these spirits, swaying the racked thoughts of the unfortunate man, towards penitence or obduracy, is one of the most wonderful mental portrayals in English literature. At this depiction of conscience inclined to and fro by the scruples and sophistries of a tormented mind, those who still remembered the lessons of the old Moralities must have been stricken with awe, and have shuddered as they heard the stage clock strike eleven, and Faustus exclaim :

Ah, Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually.
Stand still thou ever moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come.

.

. . . Or let this hour be but

A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul. . . .

[*The watch strikes.*]

O, half the hour is past : 'twill all be past anon.
O, if my soul must suffer for my sin,

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Impose some end to my incessant pain !
Let Faustus live in Hell a thousand years !
A hundred thousand, and at last be saved !
No end is limited to damned souls.
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul ?

No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer,
That hath deprived thee of the joys of Heaven.
[The clock strikes twelve.]

O soul be changed into small water-drops,
And fall into the Ocean, ne'er be found !
O mercy, Heaven, look not so fierce on me !
Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while :
Ugly Hell, gape not ; come not Lucifer.
I'll burn my books ! O Mephistophilis !

This final scene is terrible enough to read ; but what it must have been to see, and when acted by a man like Alleyn, is beyond conception. After such an awful portrayal of the hero's last agony, it is not incredible that what old Prynne averred found believers. He declared that in the reign of Elizabeth, the Devil's visible apparition appeared "on the stage at the Belsavage Playhouse (to the great amazement both of the actors and the spectators) whilst they were there prophanely playing 'The History of Faustus,' the truth of which I have heard," said the old libeller, "from many now alive, who well remember it, there being some distracted with that fearefull sight."

No finer sermon than Marlowe's "Faustus" ever came from the pulpit. What more fearsome exposure was ever offered of the punish-

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ment man brings upon himself by giving way to the temptations of his grosser appetites? The reader having the victim's frightful end before him, so filled with horror, yet seeming true to nature, could nature be so tried, strives to exclude those last agonizing cries from his mind, and, as he sadly closes the volume joins in the mournful monody of Chorus :

Cut is the branch that might have grown full
straight,
And burnèd is Apollo's laurel branch.

Goethe, before he began his master-work of "Faust," had thought of translating Marlowe's drama into German, exclaiming, "How greatly is it all planned!" and Swinburne, who was never weary of praising its sublimity, said, "Of all great poems in dramatic form it is perhaps the most remarkable of aim and simplicity of construction"; and again, "Few master-pieces of any age, in any language, can stand beside this tragic poem . . . for the qualities of terror and splendour, for intensity of purpose."

VI

IT is unfortunate that the real sequence of Marlowe's literary labours can only be guessed at, and, indeed, what works he did execute can only be speculated about. A tragedy upon the life and deeds of George

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Scanderberg, a suitable theme for the poet, was ascribed to the author of "Tamburlaine." It was performed by the Earl of Oxford's company, not later than 1588, but has utterly disappeared. Gabriel Harvey, in a sonnet wherein he gloats over the news of Marlowe's death, makes two references to this work in connexion with the poet. Other works in which Marlowe had a part, or is believed to have collaborated in, will be referred to; but a drama which is known to be his, "The Jew of Malta," was apparently written by 1588, although it was not registered until 1594, nor published until 1633, forty years after its author's death.

There has been much needless speculation as to the source whence Marlowe derived the story upon which he founded this drama, a drama that evidently furnished Shakespeare with several suggestions for his "Merchant of Venice." Professor A. Wagner, in his erudite work on "The Jew of Malta," has shown that Marlowe's Barabas was founded upon the story of a certain Joseph Nassi, a Jewish convert, who attained to immense power under the Turkish Sultan Selim the Second, and caused great damage and loss to the Christians. The story is in the collection of semi-historical tales by the Spaniard Pedro Mexia, from which collection Marlowe, as we have seen, drew much of the material for his drama of "Tamburlaine."

The play was produced by Lord Strange's players, for whom Marlowe was still writing, and who were acting at the Cross Keys, Bishops-

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gate, much to the annoyance of the civic authorities. In *Barabas*, the chief character of the play, an attempt was again made to portray a man of strong will seeking to subjugate his fellow-men to his power. What *Tamburlaine* effected by force of arms, and *Faustus* by the results of study, *Barabas* sought to obtain by the power of wealth. The Jew's greed for inexhaustible wealth is not the vulgar avarice of a *Shylock*, heaping up riches for riches' sake, but as a means of acquiring supremacy over the rabble, especially over the detested Christians. His passion for heaping up "infinite riches in a little room" exalts *Barabas* to heroic proportions, beside whom *Shylock* is in comparison a pigmy. The maltreatment the Jew receives arouses pity, whilst the magnitude of his revenge almost compels admiration.

The manipulation of this work, at least in the earlier portion, is more artistic than that displayed in Marlowe's two previous dramas, and the workmanship is more matured. The youth's "impassioned fury" which permeated the glowing lines of "*Tamburlaine*" is now restrained, and the weird aspirations of *Faustus* are subdued and replaced by the practical experience of the man. Hallam considered the two first acts of "*The Jew of Malta*" as "more vigorously conceived, both as to character and to circumstance, than any other Elizabethan play, except those of Shakespeare"; and, indeed, Shakespeare's indebtedness to this drama is strongly apparent, and

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instances might be adduced to show that he did not always improve what he adapted from his contemporary.

It is difficult to give a satisfactory reason for the deterioration of the three last acts of this drama, but to aver that "for a sinister lifelike figure we have a grotesque stage villain" is more than facts justify. It must not be overlooked that Barabas had had terrible provocation for the acts he committed, so that if his nature had become inhuman, the transformation was due to the unbearable wrongs inflicted upon him. It should also be remembered that the text of this drama is palpably corrupt, and that the piece was not published until forty years after the author's death. Interpolations to suit the popular taste were made from time to time, and the fiendish ferocity displayed by the leading character may have been heightened by the revisers to accord with the wishes of the audience, who would not look at a stage Jew unless he had an enormous stage nose and committed villainies in proportion.

In lieu of "Chorus" "The Jew of Malta" is introduced by Machiavelli, the *bête noire* of priests and politicians of the period. It was injudicious, if not dangerous, to present him to the public in such a position, and his language was not calculated to pacify those in power. The introductory lines were probably unparalleled amongst contemporary works for audacity of speech. It is difficult to gauge the temerity of the man who, whilst the fire had scarcely ceased

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smouldering which had consumed his fellow-collegian, Kett, for questioning the verity of the Trinity, could make a personage of his drama proclaim,

I count Religion but a childish toy,
And hold there is no sin but Ignorance ;

or who, when to question, even in thought,
“ the divine right of kings,” was an unpardonable crime, should say,

Many will talk of title to a crown :
What right had Cæsar to the empery ?
Might first made kings, and laws were then most
sure

When, like the Draco's, they were writ in blood.

Little wonder that a man who could venture to utter such revolutionary words to the public had to suffer a compulsory introduction to the City Recorder.

“ The Jew of Malta ” possesses a more distinctive plot than the previous dramas by Marlowe. The opening scene shows Barabas seated in his counting-house surrounded by heaps of gold. In a masterly monologue he counts over his latest acquisitions ; and after scornfully referring to the petty coins, the “ paltry silverlings,” he had just been paid for his “ Spanish oils and wines of Greece,” he continues :

Well fare the Arabians, who so richly pay,
The things they traffic for with wedge of gold,
Whereof a man may easily in a day
Tell that which may maintain him all his life.

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The needy groom that never fingered groat,
Would make a miracle of thus much coin :
But he whose steel-barred coffers are crammed full,
And all his lifetime has been tired,
Wearying his fingers' ends with telling it,
Would in his age be loath to labour so,
And for a pound to sweat himself to death.
Give me the merchants of the Indian mines,
That trade in metal of the purest mould ;
The wealthy Moor, that in the eastern rocks
Without control can pick his riches up
And in his house heap pearls like pebble stones,
Receive them free, and sell them by the weight ;
Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
And seld'-seen costly stones of so great price,
As one of them indifferently rated,
And of a carat of this quantity,
May serve in peril of calamity
To ransom great kings from captivity.
This is the ware wherein consists my wealth ;
And thus me thinks should men of judgment frame
Their means of traffic from the vulgar trade,
And as their wealth increaseth, so enclose
Infinite riches in a little room.

Merchants visit him, as senators would a
mighty potentate, and give him news of his
vessels arriving from various ports. Confident
in the might of his measureless wealth, Barabas
soliloquizes :

Thus trowls our fortune in by land and sea,
And thus are we on every side enriched :
These are the blessings promised to the Jews,

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And herein was old Abram's happiness :
What more may Heaven do for earthly man
Than thus to pour out plenty in their laps,
Ripping the bowels of the earth for them,
Making the sea their servant, and the winds
To drive their substance with successful blasts ?
Who hateth me but for my happiness ?
Or who is honoured now but for his wealth ?
Rather had I, a Jew, be hated thus,
Than pitied in a Christian poverty.
For I can see no fruits in all their faith,
But malice, falsehood and excessive pride,
Which, methinks, fits not their profession.
Haply, some hapless man hath conscience,
And for his conscience lives in beggary.
They say we are a scattered nation.
I cannot tell, but we have scrambled up
More wealth by far than those that brag of faith.

.
Aye, wealthier far than any Christian.
I must confess we come not to be kings ;
That's not our fault. Alas, our number's few,
And crowns come either by succession,
Or urged by force ; and nothing violent,
Oft have I heard tell, can be permanent.
Give us a peaceful rule, make Christians kings,
That thirst so much for Principality.
I have no charge, nor many children,
But one sole daughter, whom I hold as dear
As Agamemnon did his Iphigen.

But trouble is ahead ; a fleet arrives from
Turkey to collect the Maltese tribute which is
overdue, and is now, as Barabas sees, " such a
sum as all the wealth of Malta cannot pay."

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He does not care, he says in an aside, whether they fight and conquer, and kill all,

So they spare me, my daughter, and my wealth ;
but, in order not to be taken at advantage, he secretes a goodly share of his enormous wealth. His foresight was needed. At the intercession of the Christian governor, the Turks grant the Maltese a month to collect the ten years' tribute due, and sail away. The best plan to raise the amount appeared to be to squeeze it out of the Jews ; so the leading men of the Hebrew race were summoned before the governor and were told that each man would have to deliver up half his estate or, in the event of refusal, become a Christian, and lose the whole of his property. In view of the penalty all, except Barabas, consent to give up half their property ; but he, for his momentary refusal, is adjudged to have the whole of his wealth confiscated to the State. His arguments and pleadings are answered by scriptural quotations, to which he responds :

What, bring you Scriptures to confirm your wrongs ?
Preach me not out of my possessions.

Some Jews are wicked, as all Christians are :

But say the tribe that I descended of

Were all in general cast away for sin,

Shall I be tried by their transgression ?

The man that dealeth righteously shall live ;

And which of you can charge me otherwise ?

The governor is relentless, and orders that the whole of the Jew's possessions shall be seized,

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and his residence be converted into a nunnery. Upon hearing this decree Barabas exclaims :

Well then, my Lord, say, are you satisfied ?
You have my goods, my money, and my wealth,
My ships, my store, and all that I enjoyed :
And having all, you can request no more,
Unless your unrelenting flinty hearts
Suppress all pity in your stony breasts
And now shall move you to bereave my life.

“ To stain our hands with blood,” declares the governor, “ is far from us and our profession,” to which Barabas answers :

Why, I esteem the injury far less
To take the lives of miserable men
Than be the causers of their misery.

His fellow Jews condole with Barabas ; then, bidding him be patient, slink away. In his contempt for them he says :

See the simplicity of these base slaves,
Who, for the villains have no wit themselves,
Think me to be a senseless lump of clay
That will with every water wash to dirt.
No, Barabas is born to better chance,
And framed of finer mould than common men . . .
A reaching thought will search his deepest wits,
And cast with cunning for the time to come ;
For evils are apt to happen every day.

The Jew's difficulty is how to obtain the immense treasure which he has secreted in his late residence, now become a nunnery. He instructs his daughter Abigail to return to her

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home, whence she has been ejected, and offer herself to the abbess as a nun, trusting by the girl's assistance to regain the hidden wealth. As he tells her, "Religion hides many mischiefs from suspicion." Abigail follows his directions, is admitted to the new-made nunnery and received into the sisterhood.

At night time Barabas watches outside his former residence for Abigail, waiting for her to appear. "Thus, like the sad presaging raven," he reflects, which

In the shadow of the silent night
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings,
Vexed and tormented runs poor Barabas
With fatal curses towards these Christians.
The uncertain pleasures of swift-footed time
Have ta'en their flight, and left me in despair ;
And of my former riches rests no more
But bare remembrance, like a soldier's scar,
That has no further comfort for his wound.
Oh thou, that with a fiery pillar led'st
The sons of Israel through the dismal shades,
Light Abraham's offspring ; and direct the hand
Of Abigail this night ; or let the day
Turn to eternal darkness after this. . . .

Barabas not yet perceiving his daughter, who has entered above, resumes his monologue :

Now I remember those old women's words,
Who in my wealth would tell me winters' tales,
And speak of spirits and ghosts that glide by night
About the place where Treasure hath been hid ;
And now methinks that I am one of those ;

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For whilst I live here lives my soul's sole hope,
And, when I die, here shall my spirit walk.

.

But stay, what star shines yonder in the East ?
The loadstar of my life, if Abigail.

His daughter has indeed discovered his treasure, and throws down to him bag after bag of his cherished possessions, which he receives with an outburst of joy :

My gold, my fortune, my felicity !
Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy !
Welcome the first beginner of my bliss !
Oh Abigail, Abigail, that I had thee here too,
Then my desires were fully satisfied.
But I will practise thy enlargement thence.
Oh girl ! oh gold ! oh beauty ! oh my bliss !

[Hugs his bags.]

.

Farewell, my joy, and by my fingers take
A kiss from him that sends it from his soul.
Now, Phœbus, ope the eyelids of the day,
And for the raven wake the morning lark,
That I may hover with her in the air ;
Singing o'er these as she does o'er her young.

With his regained wealth Barabas again takes a position in society, where he meditates revenge upon the hated, tyrannical Christians, who "were ne'er thought upon," he says, "till Titus and Vespasian conquered us" :

They hoped my daughter would have been a nun ;
But she's at home, and I have bought a house
As great and fair as is the Governor's ;
And there in spite of Malta will I dwell. . . .

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I am not of the tribe of Levy, I,
That can so soon forget an injury.
We Jews can fawn like spaniels when we please :
And when we grin we bite, yet are our looks
As innocent and harmless as a lamb's.
I learned in Florence how to kiss my hand,
Heave at my shoulders when they call me dog,
And duck as low as any bare-foot friar ;
Hoping to see them starve upon a stall,
Or else be gathered for in our Synagogue,
That, when the offering basin comes to me,
Even for charity I may spit into it.

The time now arrives when Barabas proceeds to put his schemes of vengeance into force. Two young Christians, one the cruel governor's son, are suitors for Abigail : she loves one, but has no regard for the other, yet at her father's command she is compelled to feign affection for both and is betrothed to both of them, her father telling her :

It's no sin to deceive a Christian ;
For they themselves hold it a principle,
Faith is not to be held with heretics ;
But all are heretics that are not Jews ;
This follows well, and, therefore, daughter, fear not.

Barabas excites the jealousy of the two youthful competitors, incites them to fight and kill each other. When the miserable girl hears the facts she forsakes her home, re-enters the nunnery, and becomes a Christian in reality.

On learning what Abigail has done, the Jew's love for her is turned to hatred, and as he lives in fear that she will betray him at the con-

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fessional, by the aid of his slave, Ithamore, he poisons his daughter and all the nuns. Before her death the girl confesses to a friar how her father had brought about the death of her two lovers, and the friar avails himself of the information to attempt to blackmail Barabas. Accompanied by a colleague, he calls on the Jew. Again aided by his slave, Barabas strangles the would-be blackmailer, and then, following the stratagem of a very ancient story, derived from Oriental sources, although popular in many European countries, he causes the other friar to believe that he has killed his companion, gives him into custody, and gets him executed as a murderer.

The Jew's slave, Ithamore, being enticed into her house by Bellamira, a courtesan, causes the arrest of his master by the revelation of his villainies. Whilst in the snares of Bellamira, Ithamore breaks into song, singing the following variant of Marlowe's well-known lyric, "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love" :

We will leave this paltry land,
And sail from hence to Greece, to lovely Greece ;
I'll be thy Jason, thou my golden fleece ;
Where painted carpets o'er the meads are hurled,
And Bacchus' vineyards overspread the world ;
Where woods and forests go in goodly green,
I'll be Adonis, thou shalt be Love's queen.
The meads, the orchards, and the primrose lanes,
Instead of sedge and reed, bear sugar canes.
Thou in those groves, by Dis above,
Shall live with me and be my love.

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The grotesque association of "primrose lanes" and "sugar canes," and "painted carpets o'er the meads," was doubtless intentional on the author's part, but the use of the burden of Marlowe's well-known lyric in a drama ascribed to 1588 is calculated to give rise to many surmises. The words may have been popular before Marlowe utilized them, as was, probably, Ithamore's other verse later on, "Love me little, love me long," and perhaps after all they may not be due to Marlowe, but were by the writer of "additions" to the play.

In continuation of the plot of the Maltese Jew, it may be added that he contrives to poison Ithamore and Bellamira, yet not before his crimes are all explained to the governor. Then by a series of accidents Barabas himself is made governor of Malta by the Turks, and had he been contented to avenge himself on his Christian foes only, might have continued in the post, but in his demoniac hatred all round he gives himself away, and is destroyed in his own artifice.

Considering the audacity of Marlowe's language in his dramas, it is not to be wondered at that he came in contact with the authorities. In the latter part of 1589 an incident occurred in his career which, if not clearly explained in the known records of his time, can be plausibly accounted for. The civic authorities of London disapproved of every kind of dramatic entertainment taking place in the metropolis, and during Elizabeth's reign issued various stringent pro-

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clamations against such performances within the city boundaries. Theatrical entertainments of all kinds were detested by the Puritan portion of the Corporation, and many other sober-minded citizens regarded stage-acting with dislike as calculated to allure and lead their apprentices and the younger members of their households into vicious company.

Edward Tylney, Master of the Revels, inspired apparently by a higher official, wrote about the end of 1589 to the Lord Mayor of London to tell him that he was displeased with the companies of players belonging to the Lord Admiral and to Lord Strange, as they handled "matters of Divinity and State without judgement or decorum," and enjoined him to "stay them." His civic lordship gladly availed himself of this long-desired opportunity, and "sent for both companies and gave them strict charge to forbear playing till further orders." "The Lord Admiral's players obeyed, but the Lord Strange's, in a contemptuous manner went to the Cross Keyes [Bishopsgate] and played that afternoon. Upon which the Mayor committed two of them to the Compter, and prohibited all playing for the future, till the [Lord] Treasurer's pleasure was further known."

Who the two players committed to prison were is not known, but Marlowe was then writing plays for Lord Strange's company, and many speeches of his dramatic personages certainly handled matters of "Divinity and State" in a manner which in those times

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would be considered without "judgement or decorum." It is, therefore, not wonderful to find that "Christopher Marley, gentleman," had to appear before William Fletewood, Recorder of the City of London, at Clerkenwell, and give two sureties of twenty pounds each, and enter into recognizances himself for forty pounds that he should appear at the next sessions at Newgate to answer all that was objected against on the part of our Sovereign Lady the Queen, that is, of course, on the part of the public authorities.

Nothing is stated as to the nature of Marlowe's offence, nor have any records been discovered as to the result of his appearance at the next Newgate sessions. He may have been let off upon pleading "the Benefit of the Clergy," and repeating his "neck verse," as the repetition of the first verse of the fifty-first Psalm, the three words "Miserere mei Deus" ("Have mercy on me, O God"), was vulgarly called; or he may have been discharged with a caution; but as there is no evidence obtainable on the matter, the whole affair must be relegated to obscurity.

The action of the Lord Mayor shows what power the civic authorities took upon themselves in regard to public amusements; and although in the case of Lord Strange's company they were backed up by the State officials, especially Lord Burleigh, at times they were not always so successful, as their autocratic methods interfered with the Queen's love of theatricals. At that time the stage to some extent possessed

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the influence which in a later period passed to the Press, and Marlowe, more than any other known innovator, availed himself of it to lay his revolutionary ideas before the people. The public had no journals or other means of acquiring rapid information on topics of general interest until it found what it wanted in the Stage. Authors and actors responded to the popular feeling of their audiences, and despite fines and imprisonment, persisted in their endeavours to "handle matters of Divinity and State" according to their way of thinking. "Statesmen wanted the Stage to be a mere amusement," says Richard Simpson, "to beguile the attention of the hearers from graver matters; the English stage-poets felt they had a higher mission . . . they preached a varied body of philosophy, such as no other pulpit ever equalled."

Nearly all the dramatic writers had to mutilate their works, or see them mutilated, in order to satisfy the requirements of those in office, and even Marlowe, bold as he was and regardless of danger, was compelled to submit to the power of might in order to put his work before the world. His ideas, doubtless, as much as his poetic achievements brought him into contact with many prominent men of his time. Among these of his fellow-dramatists is invariably placed Robert Greene, doubtless upon his reference to Marlowe as a "quondam acquaintance"; but it is most unlikely that they had any personal knowledge of each other.

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Greene's enmity and bitter sarcasms on Marlowe commenced at least as soon as the young Cantab produced his first play, "Tamburlaine," and he never ceased his attacks as long as he lived; and even at his death, left for posthumous publication a most dangerous impugment of Marlowe's theological character. Any personal acquaintance between two such opposite natures was impossible. It is also usual to place Peele and Nashe amongst Marlowe's intimate acquaintances, but, although they both referred to him after his death with affectionate and admiring regard, neither of them claimed any personal knowledge of the poet.

The known friends and associates of Marlowe were men of a higher type. They were Chapman, Sir Walter Raleigh, the Walsinghams, Heriot, and, apparently, Shakespeare, Spenser, and, if last not least, Drayton, whom his contemporary Francis Meres described as "among scholars, soldiers, poets, and all sorts of people is held for a man of virtuous disposition, honest conversation, and well-governed carriage, which is almost miraculous among good wits in these declining and corrupt times."

The Walsinghams of Scadbury, Kent, were conspicuous amongst Marlowe's friends. The father and son, brother and nephew respectively of Sir Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's faithful friend and adviser, were both on most intimate terms with the poet. These men were noted for their exemplary life and manners, and would not have associated with anyone of

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a dubious reputation; it is therefore a high testimony for Marlowe's character to find Edward Blount, the publisher, reminding Sir Thomas Walsingham of the many kind favours he had bestowed upon the poet and of his having appreciated "the worth which you found in him with good countenance and liberal affection." Another friend, whose society and views exercised great influence upon the dramatist, was Sir Walter Raleigh. Sir Robert Naunton, who terms Raleigh "one of the best observers both of men and of the times," was fully acquainted with the leading spirits of the age, and he points out that Elizabeth, who notwithstanding her vanity was a shrewd observer of men, took Raleigh for an oracle. The chief literary and scientific men of the period looked to Raleigh as their leader in thought and action, and he it was who founded the famous "Mermaid," the first known London club. Sir Walter was of a social nature and loved to gather round him all that was best in society. Shakespeare and Ben Jonson had their celebrated "wit-combats" at the "Mermaid," the pleasures of which Francis Beaumont has told so gloriously in his Epistle to "rare Ben," and it cannot be doubted but that the author of "Doctor Faustus" was one of those who foregathered with such congenial spirits. The earliest references to Marlowe not only allude to his friendship with Raleigh but even assert that he read a paper on the Trinity before Sir Walter and his brother Carew and

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other notable persons at the knight's town house. The well-known song by Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love," evoked Raleigh's admiration and drew from him a "Response," which is almost as popular as the original poem. Many versions of Marlowe's lines have been published, but the present writer has the gratification of publishing the only one known to be from a contemporary manuscript : it is here given verbatim :

Come lyve with mee and bee my love
and wee will all the pleasures prove
that vallyes groves and woodes or feildes
and craggie Rockes or mountaines yeildes

Where wee will sitt upon the Rockes
and see the sheppardes feede their flockes
by shallow Ryvers to whose falles
melodious birdes sing madrygalles

Where wee make a bedd of Roses
and thowsande other fragrant poses
a capp of flowers and a kirtle
imbrodred all with leaves of myrtle

A belt of strawe with Ivie budes
with corraill claspes and (amber ?) studes
if these delightes thy mynde may move
then lyve with mee and bee my love

A gounne made of the finest wollee
which from our little lambs wee pull
faire lined slippers for the coulde
with buckels of the pureste goulde

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Thy dyshes shal be filde with meate
suche as the gods doe use to eate
shall one and everye table bee
preparde each daye for thee and me

The shepparde swaines daunce and singe
for thy delyght eache faire mornninge
if theise delighes thy mynde may move
then lyve with mee and bee my love.

The above version is different from and contains four lines more than any version given in any collection or selection of Marlowe's poems, and being from a contemporaneous manuscript is more authoritative, despite any errors of the transcriber. It will be noticed that in two instances verbs in the singular are made to agree with substantives in the plural, which is in accordance with the practice of the period. Raleigh's "Rejoinder" proves that the extra stanza given above is genuine, as he answers it.

"Edward the Second" is the last drama the sole authorship of which is assigned to Marlowe. The date of its appearance is very uncertain, but it is generally supposed to have been put upon the stage about 1591, although it was not entered upon the Stationers' Books until July 6, 1593, more than a month after the author's death. The earliest known edition is that of 1594, the title-page bearing these particulars :

The troublesome Raigne and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second, King of England ; with the tragical fall of proud Mortymer. As it was sundrie times publicquely acted in the honourable citie of London.

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By the right honourable the Earle of Pembroke his Servaunts. Written by Chri. Marloe Gent. Imprinted at London for William Jones, dwelling neare Holborne conduit at the Signe of the Gunne 1594.

From this title-page various little biographical data are obtainable. Firstly, it will be seen that the author had transferred his services, at least for this occasion, from Lord Strange to the Earl of Pembroke ; and it is worth notice that the manuscript book from which the above transcript of "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love" is made was kept by Thornborough, Lord Pembroke's chaplain. That the title-page states the play had been acted several times publicly proves that it had been on the stage for some time already, as plays did not run continuously for several days in those times, but were put on the stage after lengthy intervals. Another interesting fact gathered from this title-page is that Marlowe, who had previously been writing for Lord Strange, (who became Earl of Derby in 1592,) at the same time that Shakespeare was working for that nobleman, was now writing for Lord Pembroke, whilst Shakespeare was also giving his services to the same personage. It was impossible that the two men could have been working side by side without becoming intimate, and it is almost as certain that the circumstances which led the former dramatic writer to transfer his services from one lord to the other affected the latter dramatist also. That the two poets both worked on the revision of the same dramas is

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certain, and in some instances there is every probability that they worked together and in such close intimacy of thought that it is now impossible to distinguish the workmanship of the one man from the other's.

The play of "Edward the Second" commences at the time of Edward's succession to the throne, upon his father's death. His exiled favourite, Piers Gaveston, has returned to England upon hearing of the young king's accession, and is presented in a London street reading a letter from Edward :

"My father is deceased ! Come, Gaveston,
And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend."
Ah ! words that make me surfeit with delight !
What greater bliss can hap to Gaveston
Than live and be the favorite of a king ?
Sweet prince, I come ! These thy amorous lines
Might have enforced me to have swum from France,
And like Leander, gasped upon the sand,
So thou would'st smile, and take me in thy arms.
The sight of London to my exiled eyes
Is an Elysium to a new come soul ;
Not that I love the city, or the men,
But that it harbours him I hold so dear—
The King, upon whose bosom let me die,
And with the world be still at enmity.

Three poor men enter and crave employment, one being a soldier. To this one Gaveston answers : "Why there are hospitals for such as you" ; to which the man replies :

Farewell, and perish by a soldier's hand,
That would'st reward them with an hospital !

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which seems a bid for the pit's applause, the wretched condition of thousands of discharged soldiers being at that time one of the burning questions of the day. Any attempt to curry favour with the populace had hitherto been foreign to Marlowe's disposition, but in this drama he is seen on various occasions deferring to public feeling. These passages can scarcely have been interpolated, but they may have been suggested to the poet by a shrewd observer who had more personal knowledge of the commonalty than he could have had.

Gaveston, in an *aside*, disclaims any sympathy for such men, but, upon reflection, adds :

But yet it is no pain to speak men fair ;
I'll flatter these and make them live in hope.
You know that I came lately out of France,
And yet I have not viewed my lord the King ;
If I speed well, I'll entertain you all.

These men disposed of, Marlowe puts into the mouth of Gaveston lines more in accordance with his former poetic manner. The royal favourite portrays the amusements he will provide for the King's delight :

These are not men for me.
I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant King which way I please.
Music and poetry is his delight ;
Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows.
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,

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Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad ;
My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance the antique hay.¹
Sometimes a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,
And in his sportful hands an olive tree, . . .
Shall bathe him in a spring ; and there hard by,
One like Acteon peeping through the grove,
Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,
And running in the likeness of a hart
By yelping hounds pulled down, and seem to die ;—
Such things as these best please his majesty.

Very different matters from masks and music claim the King's attention. The nobles are indignant at the recall of Gaveston and threaten to make war upon their sovereign unless he dismisses the detested favourite. Edward at first defies them and creates Gaveston Lord High Chamberlain, Chief Secretary of State, Earl of Cornwall, and King of Man, saying :

Thy worth, sweet friend, is far above my gifts.

Therefore, to equal it, receive my heart.

If for these dignities thou be envied,

I'll give thee more. . . .

Fear'st thou thy person ? Thou shalt have a
guard.

Wantest thou gold ? Go to my treasury.

Would'st thou be loved and feared ? Receive my
seal.

Save or condemn, and in our name command

Whatso thy mind affects, or fancy likes.

¹ An olden dance.

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to which Gaveston responds :

It shall suffice me to enjoy your love,
Which whiles I have, I think myself as great
As Cæsar riding in the Roman streets,
With captive kings at his triumphant car.

Not only do the nobles prepare for war, but the Archbishop of Canterbury, angered at Gaveston's ill-treatment of the Bishop of Coventry, threatens the King with excommunication unless he banishes his minion. Under this pressure Edward signs the order for Gaveston's banishment, but as the nobles depart, exclaims :

Why should a king be subject to a priest ?
Proud Rome ! that hatchest such imperial grooms,
For these thy superstitious taper-lights,
Wherewith thy antichristian churches blaze,
I'll fire thy crazed buildings, and enforce
The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground !
With slaughtered priests make Tiber's channel
swell,
And banks raised higher with their sepulchres !

Such speeches were well calculated to excite the applause of Elizabethan audiences, but were not very typical of the weak-minded Edward, who without the personal support of his favourite was unfit to cope with peer or prelate. When Gaveston appears to ask if the rumours of his banishment be true his royal friend is obliged to tell him that they are true, "the legate of the Pope will have it so," but promises :

I will reign to be revenged of them ;
And, therefore, sweet friend, take it patiently.

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Live where thou wilt, I'll send thee gold enough ;
And long thou shalt not stay, or if thou dost,
I'll come to thee ; my love shall ne'er decline.

Finally, Edward appoints Gaveston governor of Ireland, to "there abide till fortune call thee home." The King is about to accompany Gaveston on the way when he is confronted by his wife Queen Isabella. She charges Edward with neglecting her for Gaveston, whereupon he accuses her of undue regard for the younger Mortimer, the most daring of the barons, and forbids her his presence until she has obtained the repeal of Gaveston's order of exile. The deserted Queen solaces herself with a soliloquy of a very Marlowesque character, concluding, however, that she must entreat the King and must speak him fair.

Persuaded by the Queen, Mortimer asks the barons to recall Gaveston ; he suggests that the exiled man with his store of gold may purchase such friends in Ireland

As he will front the mightiest of us all :
And whereas he shall live and be beloved,
'Tis hard for us to work his overthrow. . . .
But were he here, detested as he is,
How easily might some base slave be suborned
To greet his lordship with a poniard,
And none so much as blame the murderer,
But rather praise him for that brave attempt,
And in the Chronicle enrol his name
For purging of the realm of such a plague !

Lancaster asks "how chance this was not

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done before ? ” to which the younger Mortimer replies, “ Because, my lords, it was not thought upon ” ; moreover arguing, “ when the commons and the nobles join, ’tis not the King can buckler Gaveston ” —a somewhat too democratic combination for those times. It is arranged that Gaveston shall be recalled. Meantime the King is presented still mourning, in a Marlowe-like speech, his absent favourite :

My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
Which beats upon it like the Cyclops’ hammers,
And with the noise turns up my giddy brain,
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.

When Edward is informed that his favourite is to be recalled he becomes friendly with all the hostile nobles and promises the Queen renewal of love. The elder Mortimer counsels his nephew to let the King have his own way, as “ youth is flexible ” and “ riper years will wean him from such toys,” but the fiery young Mortimer, a second Hotspur, in truly Shakespearean tones, replies :

Uncle, his wanton humour grieves not me ;
But this I scorn, that one so basely born
Should by his sovereign’s favour grow so pert,
And riot it with the treasure of the realm.
While soldiers mutiny for want of pay
He wears a lord’s revenue on his back,
And, Midas-like, he jets it in the court,
With base outlandish cullions at his heels,
Whose proud fantastic liveries make such show,
As if that Proteus, god of shapes, appeared.
I have not seen a dapper Jack so brisk ;

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He wears a short Italian hooded cloak,
Larded with pearl, and, in his Tuscan cap,
A jewel of more value than the crown.
While others walk below, the King and he,
From out a window laugh at such as we,
And flout our train, and jest at our attire.

In yet more Shakespearean manner the crafty young Spencer, who eventually succeeds Gaveston in the King's regard, thus counsels Baldock, whilom tutor to Edward's niece, now destined for the favourite's bride :

Then, Baldock, you must cast the scholar off,
And learn to court it like a gentleman.
'Tis not a black coat and a little band,
A velvet caped coat, faced before with serge,
And smelling to a nosegay all the day,
Or holding of a napkin in your hand,
Or saying a long grace at a table's end,
Or making low legs to a nobleman,
Or looking downward with your eyelids close,
And saying, " Truly, an't may please your honor,"
Can get you any favour with great men ;
You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute,
And now and then stab, as occasion serves.

Plots and counter-plots, victories and defeats on both sides follow quickly. Gaveston, captured by the barons, is through the treachery of Warwick taken from his escort and beheaded. When news of this reaches Edward he proclaims in a speech full of the olden Marlowe exuberance :

By earth, the common mother of us all,
By heaven, and all the moving orbs thereof,
By this right hand, and by my father's sword,

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And all the honours 'longing to my crown,
I will have heads, and lives for him, as many
As I have manors, castles, towns, and towers !
Treacherous Warwick ! traitorous Mortimer !
If I be England's king, in lakes of gore,
Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail
That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood,
And stain my royal standard with the same,
That so my bloody colours may suggest
Remembrance of revenge immortally
On your accursèd traitorous progeny,
You villains that have slain my Gaveston !

In place of his murdered favourite, Edward now adopts young Spencer and creates him Earl of Gloucester, but, directly upon this, receives a message from the barons bidding him remove from his princely person this Spencer. In a fury, he dismisses the herald, ordering him to get to " thy lords and tell them I will come to chastise them for murdering Gaveston." After some fighting the nobles are defeated, captured, and the chief of them are led to execution, Mortimer only being spared and sent to the Tower. Ultimately he escapes, and, reaching France, joins with the Queen and other enemies of the King, and with foreign assistance invades England and thoroughly defeats the royal troops. In company with Spencer and Baldock, Edward seeks shelter in Neath Abbey, Glamorganshire. They are disguised, but the abbot is aware whom he is sheltering and bids the King have no fear, as they will keep his royal person and his company safe. King Edward addresses the priest :

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Father, thy face should harbour no deceit.
O ! hadst thou ever been a king, thy heart
Pierced deeply with sense of my distress,
Could not but take compassion on my state.

Father, this life contemplative is heaven.
O that I might this life in quiet lead !

Yet, gentle monks, for treasure, gold, nor fee,
Do you betray us and our company.

The fugitives have been followed, and Lord Leicester with a company arrives and arrests them. He tells the King, "Your Majesty must go to Killingworth." Edward replies : "Must ! it is somewhat hard when kings must go" ; and when informed there is a litter ready for him, exclaims :

A litter hast thou ? lay me in a hearse,
And to the gates of hell convey me hence ;
Let Pluto's bells ring out my fatal knell,
And hags howl for my death at Charon's shore,
For friends hath Edward none but these and these,
And these must die under a tyrant's sword.

Accordingly the King has to part from these friends, who go to certain death, and accompanies Leicester to Killingworth [Kenilworth] Castle. Here Leicester bids him be patient and "imagine Killingworth Castle were your court and that you lay for pleasure here a space." Edward replies :

Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,
Thy speeches long ago had eased my sorrows ;
For kind and loving hast thou always been.

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The griefs of private men are soon allayed,
But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds ;
But, when the imperial lion's flesh is gored,
He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
And highly scorning that the lowly earth
Should drink his blood, mounts up into the air.
And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind
The ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb,
And that unnatural queen, false Isabel.

But when I call to mind I am a king,
Methinks I should revenge me of the wrongs,
That Mortimer and Isabel have done.
But what are kings, when regiment is gone,
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day ?

But tell me, must I now resign my crown,
To make usurping Mortimer a king ?

The Bishop of Winchester assures him he is
mistaken ; that it is for " princely Edward's right
they crave the crown." The King responds :

No, 'tis for Mortimer, not Edward's head ;
For he's a lamb, encompassèd by wolves,
Which in a moment will abridge his life.
But if proud Mortimer do wear this crown,
Heaven turn it to a blaze of quenchless fire !

Ah, Leicester, weigh how hardly I can brook
To lose my crown and kingdom without cause :

But what the heavens appoint, I must obey !
Here take my crown ; the life of Edward too ;

[Taking off the crown.]

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Two kings in England cannot reign at once.
But stay awhile, let me be King till night,
That I may gaze upon this glittering crown ;
So shall my eyes receive their last content,
My head, the latest honour due to it,
And jointly both yield up their wishèd right.

See, monsters, see, I'll wear my crown again !

[He puts on the crown.]

What, fear you not the fury of your King ?
But, hapless Edward, thou art fondly led ;
They pass not for thy frowns as late they did,
But seek to make a new-elected king ;

And in this torment comfort find I none,
But that I feel the crown upon my head ;
And therefore let me wear it yet a while !

Being pressed for a reply as to whether he
will resign or no, in a passionate fury he
answers :

I'll not resign, not whilst I live.
Traitors, be gone ! and join you with Mortimer !
Elect, conspire, install, do what you will :—
Their blood and yours shall seal these treacheries !

The deputies depart, but upon Leicester's
declaration that the prince will lose his right if
they go thus, the wretched monarch says,
" Call thou them back, I have no power to
speak " ; and upon their return the Bishop,
again asking him to choose, Edward replies :

O would I might ! but heavens and earth conspire
To make me miserable ! Here receive my crown !

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Receive it ? no, these innocent hands of mine
Shall not be guilty of so foul a crime.

He of you all that most desires my blood,
And will be called the murderer of a king,
Take it. What, are you moved ? pity you me ?
Then send for unrelenting Mortimer,
And Isabel, whose eyes, being turned to steel,
Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear.
Yet stay, for rather than I'll look on them,
Here, here ! *[Gives the crown.]*

Now, sweet God of heaven,
Make me despise this transitory pomp,
And sit for aye enthroned in heaven !
Come, Death, and with thy fingers close my eyes.
Or if I live, let me forget myself.

Bishop of Winchester. My lord—

King Edward. Call me not lord ; away—out of
my sight !

Ah, pardon me : grief makes me lunatic !
Let not that Mortimer protect my son ;
More safety there is in a tiger's jaws,
Than his embracements. Bear this to the Queen,
Wet with my tears, and dried again with sighs ;

[Gives a handkerchief]

If with the sight thereof she be not moved,
Return it back and dip it in my blood.
Commend me to my son, and bid him rule
Better than I. Yet how have I transgressed,
Unless it be with too much clemency ?

The deputies now depart, and to their leave-taking the King replies :

Farewell ; I know the next news that they bring
Will be my death ; and welcome shall it be ;
To wretched men, death is felicity.

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Lord Leicester is now removed from his charge and Berkeley is ordered to keep the King. Edward takes the order and, seeing it is signed by Mortimer, tears it, saying, "this poor revenge has something eased my mind." Berkeley informing him, "your grace must hence with me to Berkeley straight;" the King answers him:

Whither you will ; all places are alike,
And every earth is fit for burial ;

and referring to the removal of Leicester, adds :

Mine enemy hath pitied my estate,
And that's the cause that I am now removed.
. . . of this I am assured,
That death ends all, and I can die but once.

The scene changes to London, where Isabella and Mortimer are shown plotting. The faithless wife, assuring the rebel that she loves him, agrees to his suggestions, declaring :

So the Prince my son be safe,
Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes,
Conclude against his father what thou wilt,
And I myself will willingly subscribe ;

yet adds :

But, Mortimer, as long as he survives,
What safely rests for us ?

In consequence of this suggestion Mortimer employs two scoundrels to have charge of the deposed king ; to take him from one prison to another and to treat him with every kind of

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cruelty. Edward, however, despite their treatment, still lives, and Mortimer, growing anxious, soliloquizes thus :

The King must die, or Mortimer goes down ;
The commons now begin to pity him.
Yet he that is the cause of Edward's death,
Is sure to pay for it when his son's of age :
And therefore will I do it cunningly.
This letter, written by a friend of ours,
Contains his death, yet bids them save his life.

The letter is worded thus : " Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est," which may be read either as an instruction to kill the King, or as an order to spare him ; so that, if discovered, the blame of causing his prisoner's death will rest on Matrevis, his keeper. Mortimer transmits this letter by a professional murderer, who is to commit the deed and then, " by a secret token that he bears," is to be immediately put to death by the recipient of the letter. Lightborn, the appointed murderer, posts to Berkeley Castle, and there is sent down to the dark cell where Edward is confined. On his entrance the King exclaims, " Who's there ? What light is that ? Wherefore com'st thou ? " Lightborn says, " To comfort you, and bring you joyful news." The prisoner suspects the villain, but, deceived by his pretended pity, describes the horrible treatment he has received.

There in mire and puddle have I stood
This ten days' space ; and, lest that I should sleep,
One plays continually on a drum.

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They give me bread and water, being a king ;
So that, for want of sleep and sustenance,
My mind's distempered, and my body's numbed,
And whether I have limbs or no I know not.
O, would my blood dropped out from every vein,
As doth this water from my tattered robes.
Tell Isabel, the Queen, I looked not thus,
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
And there unhorsed the Duke of Cleremont.

The unfortunate man is evidently unwitting by his troubles, but that last kingly utterance is of heartbreaking pathos. Lightborn, anxious to get the King to sleep, continues to dissemble, but the wretched victim cries :

These looks of thine can harbour nought but death.
I see my tragedy written in thy brows.
Yet stay awhile ; forbear thy bloody hand,
And let me see the stroke before it comes,
That even then when I shall lose my life,
My mind may be more steadfast on my God.

Lightborn answers :

What means your highness to mistrust me thus ?

Edward says, " What mean'st thou to dissemble with me thus ? " to which the man replies :

These hands were never stained with innocent blood,
Nor shall they now be tainted with a king's.

K. Ed. Forgive my thought for having such a thought.

One jewel have I left ; receive thou this.

[Giving jewel

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Still fear I, and I know not what's the cause,
But every joint shakes as I give it thee.
O, if thou harbourest murder in thy heart,
Let this gift change thy mind, and save thy soul !
Know that I am a king : O, at that name
I feel a hell of grief ! Where is my crown ?
Gone, gone ! and do I remain alive ?

Light. You're overwatched, my lord ; lie down
and rest.

K. Ed. But that grief keeps me waking, I
should sleep ;

For not these ten days have these eyelids closed.
Now as I speak they fall, and yet with fear
Open again. O wherefore sitt'st thou here ?

Light. If you mistrust me, I'll be gone, my lord.

K. Ed. No, no, for if thou mean'st to murder
me,

Thou wilt return again, and therefore stay. [*Sleeps*

Light. He sleeps.

K. Ed. (waking). O let me not die yet : stay,
O stay a while !

Light. How now, my lord ?

K. Ed. Something still buzzeth in mine ears.
And tells me if I sleep I never wake ;
This fear is that which makes me tremble thus ;
And therefore tell me, wherefore art thou come ?

Light. To rid thee of thy life.—Matrevis, come !

Enter Matrevis and Gurney

K. Ed. I am too weak and feeble to resist :
Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul !

Light. Run for the table.

K. Ed. O spare me, or despatch me in a trice !

[*Matrevis brings in a table*

Light. So, lay the table down, and stamp on it,

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But not too hard, lest that you bruise his body.

[*King Edward is murdered*]

Mat. I fear me that this cry will raise the town,
And therefore let us take horse and away.

Light. Tell me, sirs, was it not bravely done ?

Gurney. Excellent well : take this for thy
reward. [Gurney stabs Lightborn who dies]

Gur. Come, let us cast the body in the moat,
And bear the King's to Mortimer, our lord.

Away ! [Exeunt with the bodies]

With this tragic scene it would almost appear that the drama should end, but justice demands punishment of the guilty ; it is therefore with a sense of satisfaction the spectator beholds Mortimer led off for execution and Isabella committed to the Tower. Mortimer's head is subsequently brought in to the young King, Edward the Third, who addresses his father's corpse thus :

Sweet father, hereunto thy murdered ghost
I offer up this wicked traitor's head ;
And let these tears, distilling from mine eyes,
Be witness of my grief and innocence.

There is a marked difference between "Edward the Second" and the other known dramas of Marlowe : either the author had entirely changed the character of his work, or the opinion of Richard Simpson must be adopted that "the very structure of 'Edward the Second' seems to bear witness to the *counsel and aid of Shakespeare.*" Generally critics applaud this departure from Marlowe's earlier

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style, and some believe he was on the road to rival Shakespeare ; but admirers of the poet's previous writings, full of youthful energy and pervaded with ambitious strivings for the unattainable, feel that this latest work lacks somewhat of the author's personality. What the play may have lost in poetic fervour it has, however, gained in the power of depicting character. The dramatic personages are no longer mere puppets to display the writer's idiosyncrasies but are human beings with distinct individualities. The favourite, Piers Gaveston, is portrayed with consummate ability, from the accounts given by historians, though later researches seem to prove that the man was not the reckless being depicted. The main sources for the drama of " Edward the Second " were the chronicles of Holinshed, Fabyan, and Stowe, but in several instances Marlowe deviated widely from historical fact, both as regards dates and incident. He adopted the prevalent ideas about the personality of Gaveston, but modern research puts a different aspect upon the man's character. There is no doubt that he was a man of considerable ability, and had the weak-minded Edward been permitted to follow the directions of Gaveston he might have proved a more successful ruler.

The younger Spencer as an " insolent compound of recklessness and craft " is successfully portrayed, and Edward, weak and selfish as he is, is not altogether despicable, but is, in the hands of Marlowe, a real being, with some noble

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traits to balance his follies. Young Mortimer's words and actions, save when perverted by the shameless Isabel's influence, are thoroughly characteristic of the daring, proud, self-reliant noble, who even departs to death, "as a traveller goes to discover countries yet unknown," with a jaunty air.

As the first historical play in the language worthy the title, "Edward the Second" is a notable work, deserving close study in connexion with Shakespeare's historical dramas. The resemblance can scarcely be accidental, and dates and other circumstances combine to show Shakespeare as the pupil and not the instructor of Marlowe. The latter's "Edward the Second" is frequently compared with "Richard the Second" of Shakespeare, the plan of the two plays being similar. As Swinburne, with the acumen he displayed in such matters, pointed out, there is more discrimination of character in the earlier drama, and the figures therein are more lifelike and stand out more clearly as individuals. Charles Lamb's words are a standard quotation, that "the reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward furnished hints which Shakespeare scarce improved in his 'Richard the Second,' and the death scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted."

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VII

AMONGST the various dramas ascribed to Marlowe's pen the least interesting is "The Massacre of Paris." Its history is scanty, and Marlowe's work upon it is nothing but conjecture. It was assigned to him by the earliest, but undated, edition ; yet there are not many lines in the book which it would be safe to point out as his. Some of the soliloquies by the Guise have a touch of the master's hand, and there are characteristic sayings that few but Marlowe would have ventured upon in those days. "Religion ! Fie ! I am ashamed . . . to think a word of such simple sound, of so great matter should be made the ground " bears the impress of his stylus ; and the exclamation of Remus, when threatened with death by murderers on St. Bartholomew's night unless he gave them gold, is very similar to other sayings of the poet : "Alas, I am a scholar ! how should I have gold ? " And such lines as these are Marlowe-like :

A royal seat, a sceptre, and a crown ;
That those which do behold, they may become
As men that stand and gaze against the sun ;

but the entire play is so unequal and evidently corrupt that it is unsafe and useless to hazard speculations as to its authorship.

"The Tragedie of Dido, Queene of Carthage :
Played by the children of her Majesties Chappell.

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Written by Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nash Gent. . . . At London, Printed by the Widdowe Orwin, for Thomas Woodcocke, and are to be solde at his shop, in Paules church-yard, at the signe of the black Beare. 1594"—is the title-page of another drama in which Marlowe evidently had no inconsiderable part. The 1594 edition is probably the first, as there is no likelihood of the work having been published, or even having been played, during the lifetime of Marlowe. It is evidently an early production of Marlowe's, thrown aside through some unknown circumstances, and never completed. When our poet died everything he had had a hand in was raked up and published whilst his name was still one of note. Nashe was generally in need of work, and probably was given the job of completing and editing the fragmentary play. That he had nothing to do with "Dido" during Marlowe's lifetime seems fairly certain, as it may be accepted as certain that the two writers had no personal knowledge of each other until after 1589, and very little if any at any time. The only writer Marlowe seems to have had any literary partnership with was Shakespeare, and Nashe was the posthumous partner just because he was handy.

Marlowe's earlier mannerisms pervade nearly the whole of "Dido," and frequently evince the still green memory of Virgil, from whom the history is derived. Many lines are clearly early drafts of phrases used in the later works of

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Marlowe, in accordance with his custom of making revised and improved versions of thoughts which had pleased him in the days of his immaturity. These lines, in which Æneas recounts his adventures, are thoroughly representative of the poet's early writings :

With twice twelve Phrygian ships I ploughed the
deep,
And made that way my mother Venus led ;
But of them all scarce seven do anchor safe,
And they so wrecked and weltered by the waves,
As every tide tilts 'twixt their open sides ;
And all of them, unburdened of their load,
Are ballassèd with billows' watery weight,
But hapless I, God wot, poor and unknown,
Do trace these Libyan deserts, all despised,
Exiled forth Europe and wide Asia both,
And have not any coverture but heaven.

The following address of Jupiter to Ganymede is undoubtedly Marlovian :

Vulcan shall dance to make thee laughing-sport,
And my nine daughters sing when thou art sad ;
From Juno's bird I'll pluck her spotted pride,
To make thee fans wherewith to cool thy face ;
And Venus' swans shall shed their silver down,
To sweeten out the slumbers of thy bed ;
Hermes no more shall show the world his wings,
If that thy fancy in his feathers dwell.

Those lines are as surely by the author of "Edward the Second" as they are positively not the product of that "biting satirist,"

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Thomas Nashe. Nor can the paternity of this extract be doubted :

Neoptolemus,
Setting his spear upon the ground, leapt forth,
And, after him, a thousand Grecians more,
In whose stern faces shined the quenchless fire
That after burnt the pride of Asia.

Nashe never thought, much less attempted to write, such burning things as Marlowe's fiery mind produced. One more representative extract :

Only Æneas' frown
Is that which terrifies poor Dido's heart ;
Not bloody spears, appearing in the air,
Presage the downfall of my empery,
Nor blazing comets threaten Dido's death ;
It is Æneas' frown that ends my days.
If he forsake me not, I never die ;
For in his looks I see eternity,
And he'll make me immortal with a kiss.

There are several other dramas in which Marlowe evidently had a hand. Shakespeare's " King John " seems to contain some of his work, and the same dramatist's " King Henry the Sixth " is replete with Marlovian lines. Either Shakespeare imported much of his contemporary's labour, or that contemporary placed it there himself. Not only are all the known mannerisms of Marlowe present, but even the very words and thoughts of his known dramas are repeated.

There are traces of Marlowe's work in " Titus Andronicus," and " The Taming of the Shrew " is full of borrowed Marloweisms ; but it is need-

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less to adduce more evidence of his dramatic energy or the fondness his followers had for his works. "Lust's Dominion" was published in 1657 as by Christopher Marlowe, but there is not the slightest evidence, internal or otherwise, to discredit him with any portion of that play. Other dramas associated with our poet's name need no investigation here. They have no bearing upon his story and do not affect his poetic fame.

VIII

IT is not within the scope of this work to deal with the translations ascribed to Marlowe, it therefore suffices to say that there is no trace discoverable of "The Rape of Helen," from the Greek of Coluthus, said by some writers to have been done by him "into English rhyme in the year 1587"; that about three years after Marlowe's death a portion of Ovid's "Elegies" by "C. M." was published in a volume, also including original "Epigrammes," by "J. D.," these initials being representative of Sir John Davies and Christopher Marlowe. In a subsequent reprint a translation of the whole of the "Amores" was given as by "C. M." On September 28, 1593, "Lucan's First Booke," "translated line for line by Chr. Marlow," was entered on the Stationers' Books, but the only early edition of the work known is dated 1600. There is an

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"Introduction," in a sarcastic vein, professedly written by Thomas Thorpe, the publisher of Shakespeare's "Sonnets," dedicated to Edward Blunt, a publisher who had referred to Marlowe after his decease in eulogistic terms. To those interested in the career of Marlowe it may be noted that the "Introduction" to this work is the most acceptable part of the volume.

Amongst the lyrical "poetry" fathered upon Marlowe was a "Dialogue in Verse," first published by J. P. Collier, and reprinted in every collection of the poet's works until the author of the present book showed its fraudulent character; nor are a sonnet and two pieces of verse, by "Ignoto," printed after the "Epigrams" of Sir John Davies, by our poet; and it seems extremely probable that "The Latin Epitaph" on Sir John Manwood is equally untrustworthy. All these pieces, and, probably, the "Elegies," should be omitted from the works of Marlowe, as there is no credible evidence of them being his. There is a short fragment over the name of Ch. Marlowe included in "England's Parnassus," an anthology of 1600, under the "Description of Seas, Waters, Rivers, etc." Whatever the nature may be of the poem from which this fragment is extracted, and whoever its author was, the lines themselves seem to have been overrated. They run thus :

I walked along a stream, for pureness rare,
Brighter than sunshine ; for it did acquaint
The dullest sight with all the glorious prey
That in the pebble-paved channel lay.

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No molten crystal, but a richer mine,
Even Nature's rarest alchymy ran there,—
Diamonds resolved,¹ and substance more divine,
Through whose bright-gliding current might appear
A thousan naked nymphs, whose ivory shine
Enamelling the banks, made them more dear
Than ever was that glorious palace gate
Where the day-shining Sun in triumph sate.
Upon this brim the eglantine and rose,
The tamarisk, olive and the almond tree,
As kind companions, in one union grows,
Folding their twining arms, as oft we see
Turtle-taught lovers either other close,
Lending to dulness feeling sympathy,
And as a costly valance o'er a bed,
So did their garland-tops the brook o'er spread.
Their leaves that differed both in shape and show,
Though all were green, yet difference such in green,
Like to the checkered bent of Iris' bow,
Prided the running main, as it had been.

Happily, there is no cause for doubting the authorship of Marlowe's masterpiece, his exquisite poem of "Hero and Leander." This fragment, as it is styled, really concludes where one would wish it to. It was entered on the Stationers' Books on September 28, 1593, but, for some unknown reason, was not published, as far as can be ascertained, until 1598. There are several intricate puzzles in connexion with the priority of the various editions of this poem, but there is no necessity to deal with this bibliographical matter here. The first edition is that, apparently, bearing the terse title

¹ Dissolved.

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“Hero and Leander. By Christopher Marloe. London, Printed by Adam Islip, for Edward Blunt. 1598.”

Edward Blunt's dedication of the work to Sir Thomas Walsingham, Marlowe's firm friend, is a most interesting piece of literature and must be given *in extenso* :

Sir,

We think not ourselves discharged of the duty we owe to our friend when we have brought the breathless body to the earth : for albeit the eye there taketh his ever-farewell of that beloved object yet the impression of the man that hath been dear unto us, living an after life in our memory, there putteth us in mind of further other obsequies due unto the deceased. And namely of the performance of whatsoever we may judge shall make to his living credit and to the effecting of his determinations prevented by the stroke of death. By these meditations (as by an intellectual will) I suppose myself executor to the unhappily deceased author of this Poem ; upon whom knowing that in his lifetime you bestowed many kind favours, entertaining parts of reckoning and worth which you found in him with good countenance and liberal affection ; I cannot but see so far into the will of him dead, that whatsoever issue of his brain should chance to come abroad, that the first breath it should take might be the gentle air of your liking ; for, since his self had been accustomed thereunto it would prove more agreeable and thriving to his right children, than any other foster countenance whatsoever. At this time seeing that this unfinished Tragedy happens under my hands to be imprinted ; of a double duty, the one to yourself, the other to the deceased, I present the same

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to your most favourable allowance, offering my
utmost self now and ever to be ready At your Worship's
disposing :
EDWARD BLUNT.

This dedicatory letter from Blunt, a well-known author as well as publisher, and a man in every respect of credit, is a testimony of the respect and affection entertained for Marlowe by worthy men.

"Hero and Leander," certainly one of the most beautiful narrative poems in the language, had probably been germinating for some time in the author's brain, for in the first known edition of "Doctor Faustus" he speaks of "sweet Musæus," the somewhat mythical Greek poet from whom the basis of the story is derived. The poem was evidently the production of Marlowe's latest life, and its completion prevented, as Blunt points out, "by the stroke of death." The finish and skill displayed in the management of the work could only have been attained by an experienced writer, by a man who had acquired his art by long practice. The beauty and passion of "Hero and Leander" have gained its author a wider and more intimate reputation than have any of his dramas, and its popularity grows with time. Its sensuousness never degrades to sensuality, for it is replete with the purity of natural affection, and the warmth of passion which palpitates in its recital is but proper to and inherent in youth. The keynote of the story is struck at once :

On Hellespont, guilty of true love's blood,
In view and opposite two cities stood,

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Sea-borderers, disjoined by Neptune's might ;
The one Abydos, the other Sestos hight.
At Sestos Hero dwelt ; Hero the fair, . . .
Amorous Leander, beautiful and young,
(Whose tragedy divine Musæus sung),
Dwelt at Abydos ; since him dwelt there none
For whom succeeding times make greater moan.
His dangling tresses, that were never shorn,
Had they been cut, and unto Colchos borne,
Would have allured the venturous youth of Greece
To hazard more than for the Golden Fleece. . . .
His body was as straight as Circe's wand,
Jove might have sipt out nectar from his hand. . . .

Let it suffice

That my slack Muse sings of Leander's eyes ;
Those orient cheeks and lips, exceeding his
That leapt into the water for a kiss
Of his own shadow, and, despising many,
Died ere he could enjoy the love of any. . . .
A pleasant smiling cheek, a speaking eye,
A brow for love to banquet royally ; . . .
The men of wealthy Sestos every year,
For his sake whom their goddess held so dear,
Rose-cheeked Adonis, kept a solemn feast,
Thither resorted many a wandering guest
To meet their loves : such as had none at all,
Came lovers home from this great festival. . . .
But, far above the loveliest, Hero shined,
And stole away the enchanted gazer's mind. . . .
So ran the people forth to gaze upon her,
And all that viewed her were enamoured on her.
There might you see one sigh ; another rage ;
And some, their violent passion to assuage,
Compile sharp satires ; but, alas, too late !
For faithful love will never turn to hate. . . .

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On this feast day—oh, cursèd day and hour !—
Went Hero, thorough Sestos, from her tower
To Venus' temple, where unhappily,
As after chanced, they did each other spy. . . .
And in the midst a silver altar stood :
There Hero sacrificing turtles' blood,
Veiled to the ground, veiling her eyelids close ;
And modestly they opened as she rose :
Thence flew Love's arrow with the golden head ;
And thus Leander was enamourèd.
Stone-still he stood, and ever more he gazed,
Till with the fire, that was his countenance blazed,
Relenting Hero's gentle heart was strook ;
Such force and virtue hath an amorous look.
It lies not in our power to love or hate,
For will in us is over-ruled by Fate.
When two are stripped, long ere the course begin,
We wish that one should lose, the other win. . . .
The reason no man knows ; let it suffice,
What we behold is censured by our eyes.
Where both deliberate, the love is slight,
Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight ?
He kneeled ; but unto her devoutly prayed :
Chaste Hero to herself thus softly said,
" Were I the saint he worships, I would hear
him."
And as she spake those words, came somewhat near
him.
He started up ; she blushed as one ashamed ;
Wherewith Leander much more was enflamed.
He touched her hand ; in touching it she trembled ;
Love deeply grounded, hardly is dissembled.
These lovers parled by the touch of hands :
True love is mute, and oft amazèd stands. . . .
And now begins Leander to display

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Love's holy fire, with words, with sighs, and tears,
Which like sweet music, entered Hero's ears ;
And yet at every word she turned aside,
And always cut him off, as he replied.
At last, like to a bold sharp sophister,
With cheerful hope thus he accosted her :
" Fair creature, let me speak without offence.
I would my rude words had the influence
To lead thy thoughts as thy fair looks do mine ! . . .
My words shall be as spotless as my youth,
Full of simplicity and naked truth. . . .
A heavenly nymph, beloved of human swains,
Receives no blemish, but oftentimes more grace ;
Which makes me hope, although I am but base,
Base in respect of thee divine and pure,
Dutiful service may thy love procure ;
And I in duty will excel all other,
As thou in beauty dost exceed Love's mother.
Nor heaven nor thou were made to gaze upon :
As heaven preserves all things, so save thou
 one. . . .
Why vowest thou, then, to live in Sestos here,
Who on Love's seas more glorious would'st
 appear . . .
One is no number ; maids are nothing, then
Without the sweet society of men.
Wilt thou live single still ? one shalt thou be,
Though never-singling Hymen couple thee. . . .
Honour is purchased by the deeds we do ;
Believe me, Hero, honour is not won
Until some honourable deed be done.
Seek you, for chastity, immortal fame,
And know that some have wronged Diana's name ?
Whose name is it, if she be false or not,
So she be fair, but some vile tongues will blot ?

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But you are fair, ah me ! so wondrous fair,
So young, so gentle, and so debonaire
As Greece will think, if thus you live alone,
Some one or other keeps you as his own.
Then, Hero, hate me not, nor from me fly,
To follow swiftly-blasting infamy. . . .
To expiate which sin, kiss and shake hands ;
Such sacrifice as this Venus demands.”
Thereat she smiled, and did deny him so
As put thereby, yet might he hope for mo ;
Which makes him quickly reinforce his speech,
And her, in humble manner, thus beseech : . . .
“ Love, Hero, then, and be not tyrannous ;
But heal the heart that thou hast wounded
thus.” . . .

These arguments he used, and many more,
Wherewith she yielded, that was won before.
Hero's looks yielded, but her words made war :
Women are won when they begin to jar. . . .
So having paused a while, at last she said,
“ Who taught thee rhetoric to deceive a maid ?
Ah me ! such words as these should I abhor,
And yet I like them for the orator.”
With that Leander stooped to have embraced her,
But from his spreading arms away she cast
her,
And thus bespake him : “ Gentle youth, forbear
To touch the sacred garments which I wear.
Upon a rock, and underneath a hill,
Far from the town (where all is whist and still,
Save that the sea playing on yellow sand,
Sends forth a rattling murmur to the land,
Whose sound allures the golden Morpheus
In silence of the night to visit us).
My turret stands. . . .

MARLOWE & HIS POETRY

Come thither." As she spake this, her tongue tripped,

For unawares, "Come thither," from her slipped. . .

By this sad Hero, with love unacquainted,

Viewing Leander's face, fell down and fainted.

He kissed her, and breathed life into her lips ;

Wherewith, as one displeased, away she trips ;

Yet, as she went, full often looked behind,

And many poor excuses did she find

To linger by the way, and once she stayed,

And would have turned again, but was afraid,

In offering parley, to be counted light. . . .

He, being a novice, knew not what she meant,

But stayed, and after her a letter sent ;

Which joyful Hero answered in such sort,

As he had hope to scale the beauteous fort,

Wherein the liberal graces locked their wealth ;

And therefore to her tower he got by stealth.

Wide open stood the door ; he need not climb.

And she herself, before the 'pointed time,

Had spread the board, with roses strewed the room,

And oft looked out, and mused he did not come.

At last he came : oh, who can tell the greeting
These greedy lovers had at their first meeting ? . . .

(Sweet are the kisses, the embracements sweet,

When like desires, and like affections meet.) . . .

Yet she this rashness suddenly repented,

And turned aside, and to herself lamented,

As if her name and honour had been wronged. . . .

Ay, and she wished, albeit not from her heart,

That he would leave her turret and depart. . . .

Now waxed she jealous, lest his love abated,

Fearing, her own thoughts made her to be hated.

Therefore, unto him hastily she goes,

And like light Salmacis, her body throws

MARLOWE & HIS POETRY

Upon his bosom. . . .

And now, Leander, fearing to be missed,
Embraced her suddenly, took leave, and kissed :
Long was he taking leave, and loth to go,
And kissed again, as lovers use to do.
Sad Hero wrung him by the hand, and wept,
Saying, " Let your vows and promises be kept."
Then standing at the door, she turned about,
As loth to see Leander going out.

Leander started for home, where, although
the lovers had plighted their troth in the dark
hours, the news of it arrived before he could :

For incorporeal Fame,
Whose weight consists in nothing but her name,
Is swifter than the wind ;

and all knew what had happened :

Therefore, even as an index to a book,
So to his mind was young Leander's look. . . .
His secret flame apparently was seen ;
Leander's father knew where he had been,
And for the same mildly rebuked his son,
Thinking to quench the sparkles new begun.
But love resisted once, grows passionate,
And nothing more than counsel lovers hate. . . .
The more he is restrained, the worse he fares :
What is it now but mad Leander dares ?

Urged by his new-born passion, the headstrong
youth seeks to swim the Hellespont to Hero's
tower, where indeed he arrives cold, wet and
weary ;

Breathless, albeit he were, he rested not
Till to the solitary tower he got ;

MARLOWE & HIS POETRY

“some occasion of our” (Marlowe and Kyd) “writing in one chamber two years since;” denies that he “should love or be familiar friend with one so irreligious,” who, he adds, “was intemperate and of a cruel heart, the very contrary to which my greatest enemy will say by me.” This Kyd, of whom not a single pleasant word has been left by his contemporaries, confesses that it is not “to be numbered amongst the best conditions of men to tax or upbraid the dead,” yet displays his own want of charity by reference to rumours that his fellow-citizens, the famous Harriott, the learned Warner, the poet Roydon, and others, “whom I in no sort can accuse nor will excuse,” were apparently atheists, knowing that such an accusation in those days often brought men to the stake. If this document be the composition of Thomas Kyd—and for the sake of humanity it is to be hoped it is not—there is no word too ignominious by which to designate him. The whole matter is supposed to have arisen from Kyd having been arrested for a “State libel,” and having a paper of an unorthodox character found in his possession. His own explanation of this paper, if indeed the manuscript be authentic, is: “When I was first suspected for that libell that concerned the state, amongst those waste and idle papers (which I carde not for) and which unaskt I did deliver up, were founde some fragments of a disputation, toching that opinion, affirmed by Marlowe to be his, and shuffled with some of

MARLOWE & HIS POETRY

myne (unknown to me) by some occasion of our wrytinge in one chamber twoe yeares synce."

There is no need to waste time in analysing the contents of these fragmentary manuscripts, as, even if it could be proved Marlowe had anything to do with them, they contain nothing to his detriment, save the cowardly words imputed to Kyd, whose testimony in such a case is valueless. But, in the Privy Council records for May 18, 1593, there is a note that a Star Chamber warrant was issued to Henry Maunder, a messenger of her Majesty's Chamber, "to repair to the house of Mr. Thomas Walsingham, in Kent, or to any other place where he shall understand Christopher Marlow to be remaining, and by virtue thereof to apprehend and bring him to court in his company." There is nothing to show why Marlowe's presence was required by the Privy Council, the records of which State department show that no crime was too important, or offence too trivial, at that period to escape its cognizance; but that it had nothing to do with the charges imputed in Kyd's alleged letter is certain, as that was confessedly written after the poet's death.

The friend with whom Marlowe was staying lived at Scadbury, Chislehurst; he was father of the poet's friend, Sir Thomas Walsingham, first cousin to Sir Francis Walsingham, the Queen's trusted and independent Secretary, and a man of honour and integrity.

According to the records of the Council of May 20, 1593, two days after the issue of the

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order, "Christopher Marley of London, gentleman, being sent for by warrant from their Lordships, hath entered his appearance accordingly for his indemnity herein, and is commanded to give his daily attendance on their Lordships until he shall be licensed to the contrary."

The concluding injunction was customary when their lordships were satisfied with the personal promise of the accused, and seems to have been similar to releasing a person on his own recognizances to come up when called for ; it would not have been granted to anybody, however illustrious, if the accusation had been of a serious nature, such as atheism, then a capital offence. Whatever the charge was, Marlowe's appearance, "according to his indemnity," was evidently considered satisfactory, and he was released. He seems to have left London at once, whence all persons able to get away were fleeing on account of the plague. He went to Deptford, where he appears to have had a wealthy kinsman, Anthony Marlowe, a contractor to the Government for Admiralty stores and representative of the all-powerful Muscovy Company.

Lying off Deptford was "The Golden Hind," the grand old vessel in which Drake circumnavigated the world. It was an object of wonder which drew crowds to visit it, even Queen Elizabeth visiting it, and, being magnificently entertained by "that old pirate Francis Drake," she knighted him, much to the disgust of certain sober-minded citizens. The

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vessel became a place of popular resort for persons of all ranks, and the cabin having been converted into a refreshment saloon, parties of pleasure were held there daily. An old local tradition states that on a certain day, towards the end of May 1593, Marlowe with some friends visited the famous "Golden Hind," and there met with his death. The facts of the fatal incidents are involved in mystery. According to the account given some years later by William Vaughan, a certain man had invited Marlowe "thither to a feast, and was then playing at draughts," when, for some unspecified reason, he was attacked by the poet, who was so severely wounded by his opponent's dagger that "hee shortly after died."

On June 1, 1593, all that was mortal of the poet was buried in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Deptford, in the register of which is the record, "Christopher Marlowe slain by ffrancis Archer sepultus 1 of June."

No literary man of his time received such testimony of affection from his contemporaries as did Marlowe; and after his death the best of them referred to "kind Kit Marlowe" with sympathy, admiration, reverence, and profound sorrow for his loss. During Marlowe's lifetime only one discordant voice, Robert Green's, was heard in the chorus of approbation, it being left for a later time to tarnish his reputation. His premature death—he was but twenty-nine—was the greatest loss English literature ever suffered.

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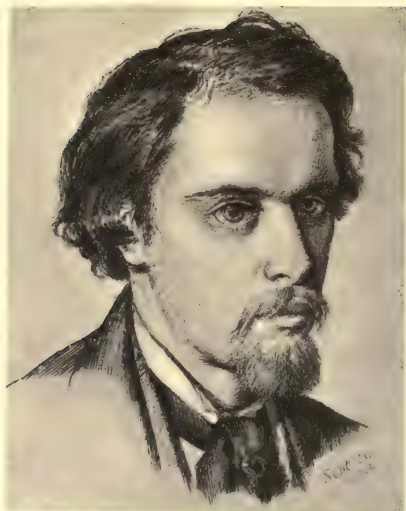


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Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

ROSSETTI & HIS POETRY

BY

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Author of "With Milton and
the Cavaliers" etc.



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GENERAL PREFACE

A GLANCE through the pages of this little book will suffice to disclose the general plan of the series of which it forms a part. Only a few words of explanation, therefore, will be necessary.

The point of departure is the undeniable fact that with the vast majority of young students of literature a living interest in the work of any poet can best be aroused, and an intelligent appreciation of it secured, when it is immediately associated with the character and career of the poet himself. The cases are indeed few and far between in which much fresh light will not be thrown upon a poem by some knowledge of the personality of the writer, while it will often be found that the most direct—perhaps even the only—way to the heart of its meaning lies through a consideration of the circumstances in which it had its birth. The purely æsthetic critic may possibly object that a poem should be regarded simply as a self-contained and detached piece of art, having no personal affiliations or bearings. Of the validity of this as an abstract principle nothing need now be said. The fact remains that, in the earlier stages of study at any rate, poetry is most valued and loved when it is made to seem most human and vital ; and the human and vital interest of poetry can be most surely brought home to the reader by the biographical method of interpretation.

GENERAL PREFACE

This is to some extent recognized by writers of histories and text-books of literature, and by editors of selections from the works of our poets ; for place is always given by them to a certain amount of biographical material. But in the histories and text-books the biography of a given writer stands by itself, and his work has to be sought elsewhere, the student being left to make the connexion for himself ; while even in our current editions of selections there is little systematic attempt to link biography, step by step, with production.

This brings us at once to the chief purpose of the present series. In this, biography and production will be considered together and in intimate association. In other words, an endeavour will be made to interest the reader in the lives and personalities of the poets dealt with, and at the same time to use biography as an introduction and key to their writings.

Each volume will therefore contain the life-story of the poet who forms its subject. In this, attention will be specially directed to his personality as it expressed itself in his poetry, and to the influences and conditions which counted most as formative factors in the growth of his genius. This biographical study will be used as a setting for a selection, as large as space will permit, of his representative poems. Such poems, where possible, will be reproduced in full, and care will be taken to bring out their connexion with his character, his circumstances, and the movement of his mind. Then, in

GENERAL PREFACE

addition, so much more general literary criticism will be incorporated as may seem to be needed to supplement the biographical material, and to exhibit both the essential qualities and the historical importance of his work.

It is believed that the plan thus pursued is substantially in the nature of a new departure, and that the volumes of this series, constituting as they will an introduction to the study of some of our greatest poets, will be found useful to teachers and students of literature, and no less to the general lover of English poetry.

WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON

PREFATORY NOTE

I HAVE to thank Mr. W. M. Rossetti and Messrs. Ellis and Elvey for their kind permission to quote freely from the historical ballads "The White Ship" and "The King's Tragedy."

H. O'B. B.

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ROSSETTI & HIS POETRY

GABRIEL CHARLES DANTE ROSSETTI was born in Charlotte Street, Portland Place, London, on May 12, 1828. From about the year 1850 he used only two of his Christian names, and reversed their order : thus the world has always known him as Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

London happened to be his birthplace, and his life was spent in England, but he was not an Englishman except by birth ; this is important to remember when he is criticized adversely for not possessing certain essentially British characteristics which by birth he did not inherit. His mother's mother was English, but his other three grandparents were Italian.

His father, Gabriele Rossetti, was a politician and patriot of no mean order in the kingdom of Naples. He took an active part in the rising of 1820 ; and, owing to its failure, he had to leave the country, and fled to England, the home of the homeless.

Gabriele Rossetti's own literary gifts were considerable : he was an enthusiastic student of Dante—hence his son's name—and published critical works on that poet, and also other compositions, both in prose and verse. In 1826 he married Frances Polidori, the daughter of an Italian of literary and poetic reputation, and

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there were four children of the marriage. Polidori's wife had been English, her maiden name was Pierce ; and from her came the only British blood that ran in Rossetti's veins.

Of the four children of Gabriele Rossetti and Frances Polidori the eldest was a daughter, Maria Francesca, who died in 1876 ; the second was Dante Gabriel ; the third the well-known art critic, William Michael, who was his brother's junior only by a year ; and the youngest Christina Georgina, the gifted poetess, who died in 1894.

In 1831 Gabriele Rossetti had been appointed Professor of Italian Literature at King's College, and he held the post till the year 1845, when his sight began to fail and he was obliged to resign it. Owing to their father's position and interests the children grew up in congenial surroundings, and in a fine intellectual atmosphere. What early records remain of the childhood of the great poet-painter point to busy happy days, and to the warmest family affection.

After a short time at a preparatory school, Rossetti entered King's College School in 1837 and remained there for six years, until he was fifteen : to the Latin and Greek and French which he there acquired he added Italian and German learned at home.

There was evidently a habit of affectionate companionship among the different members of the family, and it is pleasant to remember that, in spite of the various changes and

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sorrows inevitable to such a nature as his, family affection never failed Rossetti throughout his life. His father died in 1854, but in intercourse and in correspondence he and his mother were united to the end ; both she and his sister Christina were with him in the last sad days at Birchington, and shared the watch of his faithful lifelong friend and companion, his only brother William Michael, to whose literary work on his behalf we owe so much.

In letters of his own, and in touches here and there by his brother and other friends, we can catch a glimpse of the cheerful, intellectual, and affectionate atmosphere in which Rossetti's boyhood was passed.

Two letters to his aunts, Margaret and Eliza Polidori, give charming hints of that early home-life. The first was written before he was seven, and the family standard—or that of the day—must have been high in the matter of letter-writing, for his brother speaks of him as “backward—or one might say lazy—at letter-writing.”

“ 38 Charlotte Street, London.

“ 7 April, 1835.

“ Dear Aunt M.,—Papa has bought two shawls for Maria and Christina. Dr. Curci, a great friend of papa's, came from Naples, and has given Christina a little locket without hair, of the Virgin Mary with Jesus Christ in her arms ; it has a rim of mother-of-pearl. Papa introduced Dr. Curci to a party where there

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was the Turkish Ambassador, who asked papa to improvise.

“ I remain,

“ Your affectionate nephew,

“GABRIEL ROSSETTI.”

“ 38 Charlotte Street, London.

“ 9 July, 1835.

“ Dear Aunt Eliza,—We went to a fancy fair in the Regent’s Park, where I bought a box of paints, Maria an album, and Christina two fishes and a hook. The fair was for the benefit of a charity school. I have been reading Shakespeare’s ‘ Richard the Third ’ for my amusement, and like it exceedingly. I, Maria, and William know several scenes by heart. I have bought a picture of Richard and Richmond fighting, and I gilded it, after which I cut it out with no white. My aunt came yesterday, and gave Maria a pretty little basket ; it was worked in flowers of green card.

“ I remain, my dear aunt,

“ Your affectionate nephew,

“GABRIEL C. D. ROSSETTI.”

The poet-painter is seen here, even at seven years old ! The box of paints, and the gilded picture cut out “ with no white,” and the enjoyment in learning by heart parts of “ Richard the Third,” read, as he proudly puts it, “ for my amusement.” There is a letter written about the year 1843, to his grandfather Polidori,

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which shows singular literary acumen on the part of a boy of fifteen ; in it he identifies an Italian poem of his grandfather's as a translation of a poem by Sir Henry Wotton in Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry." There had evidently been some mistake in printing the lines as original ; but the incident throws a pleasant light as to the terms the boy was on with his grandfather, and one cannot but wish that Polidori's reply to his young critic were forthcoming.

Rossetti is described by those who knew him as a boy of strong affections and emotions ; in appearance graceful and slender, with the large round head, massive forehead, curling hair, and brilliant eyes with which his many portraits have made us familiar : the lower part of his face was its weakest, as is not infrequently the case with great men, and the moustache and beard he grew in later life improved his appearance by hiding his mouth.

He was not a boy to shine in the severely bracing atmosphere of an English public school ; but, according to his own words in later life, he endured it though he never liked it, chiefly for the sake of his mother and his desire to please her.

The slight difficulty there is in dealing with him here, where his poetry only is followed, is that painting, *not* literature, was from the first his profession : but with him the two arts were inextricably mingled ; his ideas, his aims, his very subjects were constantly the same.

When he left King's College School he studied

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first at an art academy in Bloomsbury, and afterwards at the Antique School of the Royal Academy. There he first came under the influence of Mr. Holman Hunt, with whom, in the autumn of 1847, he joined in renting a studio at 7 Cleveland Street, Fitzroy Square. Previous to this he had worked in the studio of Mr. Ford Madox Brown, and under his kindly guidance. It was in the studio at Cleveland Street that Rossetti began to paint "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," which was the first of his works to embody the principles of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. At this time he contemplated painting a picture founded on old traditions representing St. Luke preaching with pictures beside him of Christ and the Virgin, drawn by his own hand. The picture was never executed ; but the three sonnets, "Old and New Art," now 74, 75, and 76 in "The House of Life," were inspired by the theme ; and the first of them illustrates with special vividness Rossetti's conception that Art should again become the handmaid of the religious spirit.

ST. LUKE THE PAINTER

Give honour unto Luke Evangelist ;
For he it was (the aged legends say)
Who first taught Art to fold her hands and pray.
Scarcely at once she dared to rend the mist
Of devious symbols : but soon having wist
How sky-breadth and field-silence and this day
Are symbols also in some deeper way,
She looked through these to God and was God's priest.

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And if, past noon, her toil began to irk,
And she sought talismans, and turned in vain
To soulless self-reflections of man's skill,—
Yet now, in this the twilight, she might still
Kneel in the latter grass to pray again,
Ere the night cometh and she may not work.

II

IN the autumn of 1848, Rossetti and Holman Hunt saw in Millais' rooms in Gower Street a book of engravings from frescoes in the Campo Santo of Pisa, which seemed to embody the ideals of art toward which the minds of the three friends had been independently struggling. It was from that day that they determined to found what may be called a League of Sincerity, with loftier aims than those usually valued by artists, and with the leading principle that each confessor should paint his best with due reference to nature, without which there could be no sincerity. They had no intention of following, much less copying, the modes and moods of the artists who preceded Raphael, nor of rejecting anything which had been attained in the service of art since the great painter's days.

To the enthusiasm of Rossetti was chiefly due the foundation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which, though it did not live long in its original form, was destined to effect and develop an important revolution in English art.

The first "Brothers" were Rossetti himself,

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Holman Hunt, Millais, and Thomas Woolner ; and they added to their number W. M. Rossetti, Frederic George Stephens, and James Collinson ; the last remained with them but a short time, and was replaced by Walter Howell Deverell. W. M. Rossetti gives as the aim of the Brotherhood, "to show forth what was in them in the way of solid and fresh thought or invention, personal observation, and the intimate study of and strict adherence to nature." They entertained, he says, "a hearty contempt for much of the art—flimsy, frivolous, and conventional—which they saw in practice around them." Sincerity and fidelity to fact were to take the place, with them, of convention ; and, moreover, the temper of prosaic acceptance and domestic materialism was to be replaced by "the temper of wonder, reverence, and awe." Art was to re-enter the domain of the mystic and the supernatural.

Rossetti's own most memorable achievement in painting on Pre-Raphaelite principles was the supremely beautiful panel-picture of the Annunciation, "*Ecce Ancilla Domini*," begun in 1849 and finished in March 1850. The face of the Virgin was a faithful likeness of his sister Christina.

But while this picture was being painted the movement was entering on its literary phase, which was carried on, for a time, in twofold form, by a journal and a magazine.

The journal was to be a chronicle of the doings of each member of the Brotherhood : W. M.

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Rossetti was chosen as secretary, and kept the diary from May 1849 till January 1853. Its pages would be of even greater interest than they are had they not been partly destroyed by the impatient hand of D. G. Rossetti, who objected apparently to some of the entries concerned with his own work, and so tore them out and rendered the journal imperfect.

The idea of a magazine which should embody the new views and send them forth to the world was due to Rossetti, who propounded the scheme to his fellow workers in September 1849. The idea soon found favour, but some delay ensued over a title, and a list has been preserved of sixty-one suggested ! They varied in idea from "The Advent" and "Earnest Thoughts," "The Student," "The Chalice," and "The Sphere," to "The Ant" and "The Atom," "The Truth-seeker," "The Mediator," and "The Dawn." "Bud," "Acorn," "Seed," and "Sower" had also been among the proposed titles, and one akin to these was finally chosen, "The Germ," suggested by Mr. W. C. Thomas, the painter. W. M. Rossetti was to be the first editor ; he was not a painter, as were most of the other members, and so had rather more time at his disposal. The first number of "The Germ" appeared on January 1, 1850, and its list of contributors is such as to render somewhat ironical the fact that its course was run with difficulty from the beginning and came to an end with the fourth issue.

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This is the table of contents of the first number :

I. My Beautiful Lady	Thomas Woolner.
II. Of my Lady in Death	Thomas Woolner.
III. The Love of Beauty	Ford Madox Brown.
IV. The Subject in Art.	
No. 1	[J. L. Tupper.]
V. The Seasons	[Coventry Patmore.]
VI. Dream-land	Ellen Alleyn.
VII. Songs of One Household, No. 1. (My Sister's Sleep)	Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
VIII. Hand and Soul	Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
IX. " The Bothie of Toper-na-fuosich "	Wm. M. Rossetti.
X. Her First Season	Wm. M. Rossetti.
XI. A Sketch from Nature	[J. L. Tupper.]
XII. An End	Ellen Alleyn.
Sonnet (see wrapper)	

Nos. IV, VIII, and IX were in prose ; the rest in verse : " Ellen Alleyn " was the pseudonym which her brothers chose for Christina Rossetti.

The brief course of " The Germ " is one of the strongest instances ever recorded of genius unrecognized by her own time. The very names of its contributors have become household words : they gave their best in an attempt " to claim for poetry that place to which its present development in the literature of the country so emphatically entitles it " ; and, in art, to " encourage and enforce an entire adherence to the simplicity of nature " ; and yet the " forlorn little periodical "—as Mr.

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Edmund Gosse has called it—ran a precarious existence for four numbers, and then died for want of funds and lack of public support. None of the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers were rich ; after an entry in their journal, speaking of the financial loss on the first number of “The Germ,” the editor writes : “It seems that the expense to each of us beyond the receipts will be £1 15s. 5d. This is a kind of experiment that won’t bear repetition more than once or twice.” And yet when these early prophets had been well stoned by their contemporaries, a new generation industriously built their sepulchres ! In 1896 three copies of “The Germ ” were sold in London at an average of £7 apiece ; in 1897 the same number averaged £10 each ; and in 1898 the price of a set of choicely bound copies rose to £37 10s.

Rossetti’s contributions to the first issue of “The Germ ” consisted in the prose story “Hand and Soul ” and his beautiful poem “My Sister’s Sleep.” The interest of the first is enhanced by the fact that it is largely autobiographical, also that it expresses throughout the views and aims of the Brotherhood of which its author was the leading spirit.

The incidents and characters in the story are imaginary, but Rossetti puts much of his own nature into that of the hero, Chiaro dell’ Erma, a young Italian painter, who speaks often from the very soul of his creator, in the way common to so many of Browning’s characters.

It is himself he seems to describe as he dwells

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on the growing intensity of Chiaro's nature : " The extreme longing after a visible embodiment of his thoughts strengthened as his years increased, more even than his sinews or the blood of his life, until he would feel faint in sunsets and at the sight of stately persons." The painter of Arezzo is Rossetti himself, even in his habits : " Sometimes, after nightfall, he would walk abroad in the most solitary places he could find, hardly feeling the ground under him because of the thoughts of the day which held him in fever." They are the same in feeling : " With all that Chiaro had done during these three years, and even before, with the studies of his early youth, there had always been a feeling of worship and service. It was the peace-offering that he made to God and to his own soul for the eager selfishness of his aim. There was earth, indeed, upon the hem of his raiment ; but *this* was of the heaven, heavenly." Chiaro's words, when the iron of despondency had entered into his soul, might be a prophecy of Rossetti's own future : " Fame failed me : faith failed me : and now this also—the hope that I nourished in this my generation of men—shall pass from me, and leave my feet and my hands groping. Yet, because of this, are my feet become slow and my hands thin. I am as one who, through the whole night, holding his way diligently, hath smitten the steel into the flint, to lead some whom he knew darkling ; who hath kept his eyes always on the sparks that himself made, lest they should

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fail ; and who, towards dawn, turning to bid them that he had guided God-speed, sees the wet grass untrodden except of his own feet." Surely the hopelessness of failure has hardly ever been drawn with a finer or more perfect touch than in these words : the delicate beauty of the passage is beyond all comment. The spirit of the Pre-Raphaelites breathes in every page of the story, until it finds its most perfect expression in Chiaro's vision, which might have been Rossetti's own. " And when she that spoke had said these words within Chiaro's spirit, she left his side quietly, and stood up as he had first seen her ; with her fingers laid together, and her eyes steadfast, and with the breadth of her long dress covering her feet on the floor." The figure might be drawn from one of his own pictures, each touch describes his method so exactly.

And once again she spoke to him, this time in the solemn accents of farewell. " Chiaro, servant of God, take now thine art unto thee, and paint me thus, as I am, to know me : weak, as I am, and in the weeds of this time ; only with eyes which seek out labour, and with a faith not learned, yet jealous of prayer. Do this ; so shall thy soul stand before thee always, and perplex thee no more."

The words that had been spoken to Chiaro by " the fair woman, that was his soul," might well stand for Rossetti's dedication of his own life, spoken as they were upon its very threshold.

His other contribution to the first number

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of "The Germ," the poem "My Sister's Sleep," was possibly the first work of his which was ever published. It had been written about the age of nineteen; and his brother, when speaking of their visits to an old friend, Major Calder Campbell, a retired Indian officer of literary tastes, writes as follows: "I well remember that, at the instance of Calder Campbell, 'My Sister's Sleep' was produced to the editress of 'La Belle Assemblée,' a magazine of that date, 1847 or 1848, which must have seen better days aforetime, but was then still tolerably well accepted in the regions of light literature. The editress certainly admired the poem, and perhaps she inserted it; if so, this was the very first appearance of Dante Rossetti in published print."

We give the poem in full in its final form as it appears in the Collected Works, and we also give, within brackets, four verses which are omitted there, but which appeared in the first copy of "The Germ":

MY SISTER'S SLEEP

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve.
At length the long-ungranted shade
Of weary eyelids overweigh'd
The pain naught else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day
Over the bed from chime to chime,
Then raised herself for the first time,
And as she sat her down, did pray.

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Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the glare
Made by her candle, she had care
To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
Of winter radiance sheer and thin ;
The hollow halo it was in
Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound
Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove
And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirror shed a clearness round.

I had been sitting up some nights,
And my tired mind felt weak and blank ;
Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
The stillness and the broken lights.

[Silence was speaking at my side
With an exceedingly clear voice :
I knew the calm as in a choice
Made in God for me, to abide.

I said, " Full knowledge does not grieve :
This which upon my spirit dwells
Perhaps would have been sorrow else :
But I am glad 'tis Christmas Eve."]

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years
Heard in each hour, crept off ; and then
The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs.

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Our mother rose from where she sat :
Her needles, as she laid them down,
Met lightly, and her silken gown
Settled : no other noise than that.

“ Glory unto the Newly Born ! ”
So, as said angels, she did say ;
Because we were in Christmas Day,
Though it would still be long till morn.

[She stood a moment with her hands
Kept in each other, praying much ;
A moment that the soul may touch
But the heart only understands.

Almost unwittingly, my mind
Repeated her words after her ;
Perhaps tho' my lips did not stir ;
It was scarce thought, or cause assign'd.]

Just then in the room over us
There was a pushing back of chairs,
As some who had sat unawares
So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste
Our mother went where Margaret lay,
Fearing the sounds o'erhead—should they
Have broken her long watched-for rest !

She stopped an instant, calm, and turned ;
But suddenly turned back again ;
And all her features seemed in pain
With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

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For my part, I but hid my face,
And held my breath, and spoke no word :
There was none spoken ; but I heard
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept :
And both my arms fell, and I said,
“ God knows I knew that she was dead.”
And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
A little after twelve o'clock,
We said, ere the first quarter struck,
“ Christ's blessing on the newly born ! ”

The metre of this poem is the same as that always associated with Tennyson's "In Memoriam," though the rhythm is so different that they are not always recognized as identical : it is interesting to notice that W. M. Rossetti writes in the "Pre-Raphaelite Journal" for November 2, 1849 : "I saw Tennyson's MS. book of elegies on young Hallam, which are to be published some day." "In Memoriam" was published in the following year.

Rossetti, like Tennyson, constantly altered his verse, and polished it with minute care. Sometimes he seems to sacrifice beauty of thought to that of form, as in the case here in verse 12, where the original version of the poem has "she stooped" and the later form changes it to "she stopped" ; and again, in verse 4, where the original ends in two lines

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which are surely more beautiful than those in the later edition :

The depth of light that it was in
Seemed hollow like an altar-cup.

On the other hand, he gets rid of the rhyme "born" and "dawn" which originally marred verse 9, and in most of the alterations the form benefits.

The second number of "The Germ" came out in February and contained only one contribution by Rossetti, but this was "The Blessed Damozel," probably the most famous of all his works. It had been written before he was nineteen, and must always stand as an extraordinary production for a boy of that age, in whatever light it is regarded. He was an ardent admirer of Edgar Allan Poe ; and, speaking in later life to a friend about the origin of "The Blessed Damozel," he said : "I saw that Poe had done the utmost it was possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth, and so I determined to reverse the conditions, and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in Heaven." Poetry, indeed, owes a debt of gratitude to the "sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore," if from her sprang the immortal creation of "The Blessed Damozel" ! Rossetti's very name has become associated with her ; he painted her over and over again, but in verse or on canvas she is always the same, the glorified maiden leaning from Heaven to speak her thoughts of earth, the like of

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whom has never been drawn by another hand. She may lean from her gold bar in the pictured purity of her white lilies and her shining hair, or she may utter the words that seem to thrill from Heaven to earth, the effect is the same ; Rossetti's marvellous creative power is behind each : the picture once seen, the poem once heard, something has entered into life that was not there before, that cannot be ignored, that will not pass away. Bunyan's shepherds saw the Holy City from afar, Gerontius in his Dream was caught up to it, but the " Blessed Damozel " stood within it, and spoke from out the radiance of the " glass and gold, with God for its sun." Some readers may stumble at the concrete image of the " gold bar of Heaven," but to many that, and the vivid imagery throughout the poem, seem to reflect the glories of an even greater piece of word-painting, that from which we glean what knowledge we have of the " City that has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it," whose painter did not fear to use concrete forms in describing it ; whose " foundations . . . were garnished with all manner of precious stones," and whose " twelve gates were twelve pearls."

The poem, as originally published in " The Germ," was hardly the same in any verse as in the editions of the volumes of 1870 and 1881. There were twenty-five verses in " The Germ," only twenty-four in the later editions : we print from the latest volume, and also give some of the earlier renderings from " The

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Germ," so that readers may compare the two, and may note the trend of Rossetti's mind in the character of these alterations.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

I

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven ;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even ;
She had three lilies in her hand
And the stars in her hair were seven.

[Her blue grave eyes were deeper much
Than a deep water, even.]

II

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn ;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

[But a white rose of Mary's gift
On the neck meetly worn ;]

III

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers ;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers ;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

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IV

(To one, it is ten years of years.
 . . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
 Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing : the autumn-fall of leaves.
 The whole year sets apace.)

V

It was the rampart of God's house
 That she was standing on ;
By God built over the sheer depth
 The which is Space begun ;
So high, that looking downward thence
 She scarce could see the sun.

[It was the terrace of God's house]

VI

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
 Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
 With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
 Spins like a fretful midge.

Then comes, in the first edition, a verse
omitted later on.

[But in those tracts, with her, it was
 The peace of utter light
And silence. For no breeze may stir
 Along the steady flight
Of seraphim ; no echo there,
 Beyond all depth or height.]

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VII

Around her, lovers, newly met
 'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
 Their heart-remembered names ;
And the souls mounting up to God
 Went by her like thin flames.

[Heard hardly, some of her new friends,
 Playing at holy games,
Spake, gentle-mouthed, among themselves,
 Their virginal chaste names ;]

VIII

And still she bowed herself and stooped
 Out of the circling charm ;
Until her bosom must have made
 The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
 Along her bended arm.

IX

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
 Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
 Within the gulf to pierce
Its path ; and now she spoke as when
 The stars sang in their spheres.

X

The sun was gone now ; the curled moon
 Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf ; and now
 She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
 Had when they sang together.

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XI

(Ah sweet ! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened ? When those bells
Possessed the midday air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing year ?)

XII

" I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come," she said.
" Have I not prayed in Heaven ?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd ?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength ?
And shall I feel afraid ?

XIII

When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light ;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

XIV

We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God ;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

[And where each need, revealed, expects
Its patient period.]

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XV

" We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His name audibly.

XVI

" And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here ; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

This verse is omitted later.

[Alas ! to *her* wise simple mind
These things were all but known
Before : they trembled on her sense,—
Her voice had caught their tone.
Alas for lonely Heaven ! Alas
For life wrung out alone !]

XVII

(Alas ! we two, we two, thou say'st !
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee ?)

[Alas ! and though the end were reached ? . . .
Was *thy* part understood
Or borne in trust ? And for her sake

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Shall this too be found good ?—
May the close lips that knew not prayer
Praise ever, though they would ?]

XIX

“ We two,” she said, “ will seek the groves
Where the Lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

XX

“ Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded ;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robcs for them
Who are just born, being dead.

XXI

“ He shall fear, haply, and be dumb.
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak :
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

XXII

“ Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered head
Bowed with their aureoles :
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

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XXIII

“ There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me :—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love,—only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he.

[“ There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me :
To have more blessing than on earth
In nowise ; but to be
As then we were,—being as then
At peace. Yea, verily.”]

Then comes another verse, omitted later.

[“ Yea, verily ; when he is come
We will do thus and thus :
Till this my vigil seems quite strange
And almost fabulous ;
We two will live at once, one life ;
And peace shall be with us.”]

XXIV

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
“ All this is when he comes.” She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, fill'd
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

XXV

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres :
And then she cast her arms along

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The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

Some have cried out at the drop in the last verse ; at the sudden fall, as it were, from Heaven to earth : the vision glows with the glory of "the deep wells of light," of the sainted handmaidens, and the shining aureoles ; and then it suddenly narrows, and is darkened down to this solitary bowed figure, and the heavenly music is silenced by her sobs ! But this was a characteristic method of the Pre-Raphaelites : they often ended their work in a minor key ; content to leave behind no sense of triumphant attainment, but rather a feeling of endless "desiderium," and of endeavour baffled only to begin anew.

Few verbal criticisms can be given, or are necessary, on such a poem ; but the comparison of the different published forms is interesting and instructive, especially as the changes are almost invariably improvements. There are, of course, obvious instances of Rossetti's faulty rhyming, a matter in which he was careless to the end ; rhythm was always to his ears of far more importance than rhyme. Among such instances are "on" rhyming to "begun," "spheres" to "pierce," "said" to "pray'd," and "cloud" to "God" : in verse xix—there was no numbering originally of the verses, it has been done here merely to avoid confusion in reference—occurs an instance

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of inaccurate rhyming of which Rossetti was fond, that of rhyming words of unequal length provided the last syllable was near in sound : in this case the rhymes are "is" and "symphonies." In the original verse which has been omitted before verse vii there are marked instances of his tendency to carry on the sense of a phrase from line to line without a break, making the stop in the middle of the line, not at the end. It is a trick of style which Browning used effectively, but over which Rossetti never seemed to gain full mastery. It is in verse xvii that the greatest difference is seen between the two editions : the earlier form, in its concluding lines :

May the close lips that knew not prayer
Praise ever, though they would ?

recalls Mrs. Browning's "Cry of the Human"—

And lips say "God be pitiful,"
Who ne'er said "God be praised !"

In the later, Rossetti strikes a deeper note than is usual with him, in the earthly lover's passionate question :

Shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee ?

To those who remember the pathetic drama of his long engagement and short married life

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his devotion to his bride, and his overwhelming grief at her early death, it is significant rather than strange to note the fact that the later form of verse xvii was added after his wife's death. Besides many verbal changes, is there not also, throughout the poem, a subtle difference between the two forms? The "gentle-mouthed" "new friends" who play their "holy games," and greet one another with names "chaste" and "virginal," have become the "lovers, newly met 'mid deathless love's acclaims"; and the names by which they know each other are the old "heart-remembered names" of earth, now brought to be sanctified, along with all other attributes of earthly love, in the perfect Love of Heaven. And when the Blessed Damozel pictures her own petition before the Throne, surely there is the same difference? At first she rises no higher than to beg the gift of "peace," that peace they shared once on earth, than which she then knew no more. But afterwards her knowledge is fuller, the old peace no longer satisfies; it is the "Love" she now offers again, that which had been the best earth had to give, and on which she now asks for the seal of Heaven's Eternity.

The change seems there, for those with eyes to read it, and it accords well with Rossetti's life-story; for the earlier form of "The Blessed Damozel" was written for a family magazine before he was nineteen, but by the time the latest form appeared he was a man of forty-two, and the MS. leaves on which the

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first poem was inscribed had already lain for seven years, buried in the Highgate Cemetery, in the coffin of his wife.

III

THE third number of "The Germ" appeared in March, but already its continuation was uncertain, a sure sign of which being its change of name. It was now called "Art and Poetry: Being thoughts towards Nature. Conducted principally by Artists." Under this more imposing and descriptive title the rest of its brief course was run; but it is significant that in tradition it lives always only as "The Germ."

Number III contained two poems by Rossetti, both of which had been written during the preceding year, when he was taking one of his few Continental trips with his friend Mr. Holman Hunt. In the later editions of his poems these appear severally as lyrics, "Antwerp and Bruges," and "The Sea-Limits." In their first form they are called respectively "The Carillon" and "From the Cliffs: Noon"; the second is an irregular sonnet. The minute detail in "The Carillon," even to the note below its title, shows strict adherence to the Pre-Raphaelite principles, and the poem is specially interesting as enabling us to follow the thoughts on his travels of this very little-travelled poet.

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THE CARILLON

[ANTWERP AND BRUGES]

In these and others of the Flemish towns, the "Carillons" or chimes, which have a most fantastic and delicate music, are played almost continually. The custom is very ancient.

At Antwerp there is a low wall
Binding the city, and a moat
Beneath, that the wind keeps afloat.
You pass the gates in a slow drawl
Of wheels. If it is warm at all
The Carillon will give you thought.

I climbed the stair in Antwerp church,
What time the urgent weight of sound
At sunset seems to heave it round.
Far up, the Carillon did search
The wind ; and the birds came to perch
Far under, where the gables wound.

In Antwerp harbour on the Scheldt
I stood along, a certain space
Of night. The mist was near my face :
Deep on, the flow was heard and felt.
The Carillon kept pause, and dwelt
In music through the silent place.

At Bruges, when you leave the train,
A singing numbness in your eyes,—
The Carillon's first sound appears
Only the inner moil. Again
A little minute though—your brain
Takes quiet, and the whole sense hears.

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John Memmeling and John Van Eyck
Hold state at Bruges. In sore shame
I scanned the works that keep their name.
The Carillon, which then did strike
Mine ears, was heard of theirs alike :
It set me closer unto them.

I climbed at Bruges all the flight
The Belfry has of ancient stone.
For leagues I saw the east wind blown :
The earth was grey, the sky was white.
I stood so near upon the height
That my flesh felt the Carillon.

Between the lines of the musical little poem we can catch glimpses of an unusual picture, that of Rossetti as a traveller : we see him in Antwerp Church, on the harbour at night with the salt mists of the Scheldt wrapping him round, trying in Bruges to clear his head from that "singing numbness" of the train journey so as to fill it with the still abiding presence of Memmeling and Van Eyck, and with those Flemish Chimes so constantly in his ears that it is a relief at last to climb the steps of the famous belfry and stand where he feels them one with him in bodily form.

There are only four verses in the later editions of the poem, the first and fourth being omitted : this may be an improvement artistically, but one cannot help prizing the earlier lines for the sake of their little personal touches of travel-talk, the "slow drawl" of the "wheels" as he enters Antwerp, and the

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vividly accurate description of his feelings in the head when he leaves the train at Bruges !

It may be questioned, perhaps, whether the lyric "The Sea-Limits" is an improvement on the irregular sonnet "From the Cliffs" : it is the first stanza, with its beautiful imagery and the swell of the lines that seems almost that of the sea itself, that strikes the ear in each. Here is the original version :

The sea is in its listless chime :
Time's lapse it is, made audible,—
The murmur of the earth's large shell.
In a sad blueness beyond rhyme
It ends : sense, without thought, can pass
No stadium further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No stagnance that death wins,—it hath
The mournfulness of ancient life,
Always enduring at dull strife.
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
Its painful pulse is in the sands.
Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
Grey and not known, along its path.

In the later edition the first verse is certainly improved by the substitution of "no furlong further" for the somewhat pedantic "no stadium further" in its first appearance. On the other hand, an instance of Rossetti's habit of occasionally sacrificing subtle shades of meaning for the sake of attaining more musical form may be seen in the opening line of verse ii,

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where the stiff but pregnant phrase "no stagnance that death wins" drops to the rhythmical but far less expressive words "no quiet, which is death's."

The last number of "The Germ" came out in April; Rossetti contributed to it six sonnets on pictures, the outcome of his visit to Belgium, and also the beautiful little poem called here "Pax Vobis," which was reprinted later as "World's Worth." The changes in the later edition were considerable, and it seems more appropriate to give it here in its original form, dated as it appeared in "The Germ"—Ghent: Church of St. Bavon.

PAX VOBIS

'Tis of the Father Hilary

He strove, but could not pray : so took
The darkened stair, where his feet shook

A sad blind echo. He kept up

Slowly. 'Twas a chill sway of air

That autumn noon within the stair,

Sick, dizzy, like a turning cup.

His brain perplexed him, void and thin :

He shut his eyes and felt it spin ;

The obscure deafness hemmed him in.

He said : " The air is calm outside."

He leaned into the gallery

Where the chime keeps the night and day :

It hurt his brain,—he could not pray.

He had his face upon the stone :

Deep, 'twixt the narrow shafts, his eye

Passed all the roofs unto the sky

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Whose greyness the wind swept alone.
Close by his feet he saw it shake
With wind in pools that the rains make :
The ripple set his eyes to ache.
He said, " Calm hath its peace outside."

He stood within the mystery
Girding God's blessed Eucharist :
The organ and the chaunt had ceased :
A few words paused against his ear,
Said from the altar : drawn round him,
The silence was at rest and dim.
He could not pray. The bell shook clear
And ceased. All was great awe,—the breath
Of God in man, that warranteth
Wholly the inner things of Faith.
He said : " There is the world outside."

In the later edition the last line of the poem runs :

He said : " O God, my world in Thee ! "

But the priest's wistful look toward the " world outside," even from the steps of the altar itself, seem better to express Rossetti's attitude to life at this time than do the calm words of resignation in the later form.

Of the six sonnets on pictures which Rossetti contributed to the last number of " The Germ," two are from Bruges, the other four from Paris. Their titles are as follows :

- I. " A Virgin and Child," by Hans Memmeling ; in the Academy of Bruges.
- II. " A Marriage of St. Katharine," by the

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same ; in the Hospital of St. John at Bruges.

III. "A Dance of Nymphs," by Andrea Mantegna ; in the Louvre.

IV. "A Venetian Pastoral," by Giorgione ; in the Louvre.

V. "Angelica rescued from the Sea-Monster," by Ingres ; in the Luxembourg.

VI. The same.

Of these we choose No. III to print in full, not because it is above the others in merit—and it is difficult to place them when their subjects are so different—but because in it we can see most clearly the figure of Rossetti himself standing before the picture in the great gallery of the Louvre, and can follow his mind working out the allegorical thought up to the Pre-Raphaelite suggestion in the last lines.

Below the title of the sonnet comes this note :

* * It is necessary to mention that this picture would appear to have been in the artist's mind an allegory, which the modern spectator may seek vainly to interpret.

Scarcely, I think ; yet it indeed *may* be

The meaning reached him, when this music
rang

Sharp through his brain, a distinct rapid pang,
And he beheld these rocks and that ridg'd sea.

But I believe he just leaned passively,

And felt their hair carried across his face

As each nymph passed him ; nor gave ear to
trace

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How many feet ; nor bent assuredly
His eyes from the blind fixedness of thought
To see the dancers. It is bitter glad
Even unto tears. Its meaning filleth it,
A portion of most secret life : to wit :—
Each human pulse shall keep the sense it had
With all, though the mind's labour run to nought.

This is as the sonnet appeared in "The Germ": in the later edition it was called "An Allegorical Dance of Women," and the word "girl" is substituted for nymph ; for that, and other verbal alterations, the reason is not always obvious. These sonnets are specially interesting as showing the author in the unwonted light of a traveller, standing in turn before the great pictures of the Netherlands and of France, weaving his own beautifully coloured thoughts into one garland with the simple, grand beauties of those artists of a bygone age. One cannot help wondering at times what would Rossetti have been had fate, or a little more energy on his own part, extended his travels to Italy. If the Dutch galleries, and those of Paris, produced at once such songs of insight and interpretation, what might not the world have had from him could he but have stood in the picture galleries of Florence or of Rome.

But there was a lighter side to this journey of his with Mr. Holman Hunt, on which it is pleasant to dwell, and of which records remain in his letters to his brother and to various friends. Some of these were addressed to the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers on his own and Mr.

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Holman Hunt's behalf, and describe their sight-seeing from day to day, their impressions, and some of the quainter humours of their travels.

From Bruges he sends the Brotherhood a sonnet which he calls "atrocious," evidently written in the train; and which, particularly in the construction of its broken lines, reads rather like Browning gone mad! But so many pictures have been given of Rossetti shrouded in mystery within the artistic gloom of Cheyne Walk that it seems worth while to catch the wholesome impress of his figure once again as he "jolts" along the "foreign rails," and "trundles out of England into France."

BETWEEN GHENT AND BRUGES

(Wednesday night, October 24)

"Ah yes, exactly so; but when a man
Has trundled out of England into France
And half through Belgium, always in this prance
Of steam, and still has stuck to his first plan—
Blank verse or sonnets; and as he began
Would end;—why, even the blankest verse may chance
To falter in default of circumstance,
And even the sonnet lack its mystic span.
Trees will be trees, grass grass, pools merely pools,
Unto the end of time and Belgium—points
Of fact which Poets (very abject fools)
Get scent of—once their epithets grown tame
And scarce. Even to these foreign rails—my joints
Begin to find their jolting much the same.

This sonnet, and two of the letters, are given in

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the "Pre-Raphaelite Diaries and Letters," edited by W. M. Rossetti. We quote a few passages, again with the object of showing the cheerier side of the poet's nature, which perhaps is less remembered than his powers of suffering.

I believe we have seen to-day almost everything very remarkable at Bruges ; but I assure you we shall want to see much of it again. This is a most stunning place, immeasurably the best we have come to. There is a quantity of first-rate architecture, and very little or no Rubens. But by far the best of all are the miraculous works of Memling and Van Eyck. . . . I forgot to mention that Memling's pictures in the Hospital of St. John were presented to the institution by that stunner in return for the care bestowed upon him when he was received here, severely wounded and in great want, after the Battle of Nancy. . . . Before leaving Ghent we visited the great Convent of the town—the Béguinage. It is of a vast extent, containing entire streets and squares of its own. Each nun has a house to herself, over which is written not her name, but that of some saint under whose protection she has been pleased to put it. In some cases where the name was more than usually quaint, we felt disposed to knock at the door and to ask if he was in ; but refrained, as it was rather late, and we feared he might be gone to bed. We witnessed the vesper service, which rather surprised us, as we thought that among the tunes played we could recognize "Jim Crow" and "Nix my Dolly." At the end, each nun finds a kind of towel somewhere, which she folds up and puts on the top of her head ; during the service, a rather sloshy one goes about with a policeman's bull's-eye, collecting coppers. At our entrance and

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departure, Hunt dipped his fingers in the holy-water stoup, and commenced some violent gesticulations, which I was obliged to bring to an abrupt conclusion.

We have bought an extraordinary self-concocting coffee-pot for state occasions of the P.R.B. We have likewise purchased a book containing a receipt for raising the Devil, and in Paris a quantity of Gavarni's sketches, which I long to look over with you.

The buoyant good fellowship that breathes throughout these letters is thoroughly characteristic of the writer, and they form a pleasant, homely background for the rich outpourings of his poetical genius by which he led his enthusiastic Brotherhood.

Rossetti's attitude to religion was always one of artistic reverence that was almost adoration, although he belonged to no special creed. He was not a Catholic, but he was steeped in the traditions of Catholicism in its widest sense, and his religious expression was always nearer to that of our own day than to an age round which Puritan shadows seemed still to linger. An instance of this was his attitude toward the publication later on of the poem "Ave," which was probably written about this time, though not published till 1870. It seems to echo some of his visits to the grand Catholic churches of the Continent, and rings with the simplicity of devotion fitting to such a subject. It is a religious lyric addressed to the Virgin, and forms a meet fellow to his great picture "Ecce Ancilla Domini," begun as an oil-

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painting in 1850, the year after his tour with Holman Hunt. But his brother mentions with what great hesitation he inserted it in the volume for publication on account of the outlook toward Catholicism which it seems to imply. Rossetti himself writes :

“ I hesitated to print ‘ Ave ’ because of the subject, but I thought it well done, and so included it.” And to those of our own day who search his pages for the somewhat scanty number of poems dealing with religious subjects, there can hardly be any lines which will appeal more than those which picture, with an almost Biblical simplicity, the Mother’s solemn waiting “ in the house of John ” for the return of Him who was at once the Christ-Child and the King.

Mindst thou not (when the twilight gone
Left darkness in the house of John)
Between the naked window-bars
That spacious vigil of the stars ?
For thou, a watcher even as they,
Wouldst rise from where throughout the day
Thou wroughtest raiment for His poor ;
And finding the fixed terms endure
Of day and night which never brought
Sounds of his coming chariot,
Wouldst lift through cloud-waste unexplor’d
Those eyes which said, “ How long, O Lord ? ”
Then that disciple whom He loved,
Well heeding, haply would be moved
To ask thy blessing in His name ;
And that one thought in both, the same

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Though silent, then would clasp ye round
To weep together,—tears long bound,
Sick tears of patience, dumb and slow.
Yet, "Surely I come quickly,"—so
He said, from life and death gone home.
Amen : even so, Lord Jesus, come !

To those whose faith is quickened by the re-creation of sacred scenes, there can be few lines more exquisitely satisfying than these. Students who care alike for Rossetti's pictures and his poetry must always associate "Ave" with his "Ecce Ancilla Domini," which had been completed in March 1850, just before the publication of the last number of "The Germ." The face of Mary was that of his sister Christina, the angel Gabriel was founded on that of Woolner. F. G. Stephens thus describes the picture :

In a chamber, whose pure white sides and floor exhibit an intensity of soft morning light, the couch of Mary, itself almost entirely white, is placed close to the wall where dawn would strike its earliest rays, and with its head towards the window. A scanty blue curtain shaded the face of the sleeper ; behind, attached to the wall, a lamp (such as in antique chambers was rarely extinguished, and supposed efficacious against evil spirits) is still alight, although it is broad day without, and the sun reveals the tree growing close to the opening. At the foot of the couch, Mary's embroidery frame, with a lily unfinished on the bright red cloth which was the sole piece of strong colour in the picture, bespeaks one of those

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domestic occupations painters have agreed to ascribe to the Maiden Mother.

There is the same thought in the line of "Ave":

Thou wroughtest raiment for His poor.

The history of this great picture is significant of the early difficulties which beset the Pre-Raphaelite school of painters, and of the way in which they were overcome. In 1850 the picture was priced at £50, and was returned unsold from the gallery in Regent Street where it had been exhibited. Three years later it was bought for the same sum by Mr. McCracken of Belfast, one of Rossetti's earliest patrons. It was sold after his death, and changed hands more than once: in 1874 it was bought by Mr. William Graham for £388 10s., and lent by him to the Academy Winter Exhibition of 1883, shortly after Rossetti's death. In 1886 it was purchased for the National Gallery of British Art (the Tate Gallery), out of a fund bequeathed by the late John Lucas Walker, for the sum of £840. In the Tate Gallery it is now No. 1210.

In his earlier picture dealing with the same theme, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," his sister Christina had also been his model; and his mother had sat for St. Anne. He had worked at it in his old home in Charlotte Street, as is shown by the following entry in the "Journal" of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood for July 1849: "Sunday, 27th. Gabriel and I went in the morning, by appointment, to Dickenson's [Lowes Dickenson], where we met Ford Brown and

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Cave Thomas. Dickenson says that, when Cottinham first mentioned to him his intention of buying Gabriel's picture, he descanted glowingly on his genius, and expressed his horror at having 'found him in a garret.' "

To this entry Mr. W. M. Rossetti adds a note : " This would be the room appropriated to my brother and myself at the top of our family residence, 50 Charlotte Street, Portland Place. It was certainly an anti-luxurious apartment, but we had, of course, the run of the rest of the house."

The entry and the note form together a good instance of the way in which, by a slightly fanciful colouring, facts may be considerably distorted. Rossetti " in a garret " is doubtless a far more picturesque figure than Rossetti sharing a big upstairs room with his brother in his old home ; but it is pleasant to know which picture is true to life. " The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," his first oil-painting, he sold to the Marchioness Dowager of Bath, in whose family his aunt, Miss Charlotte Polidori, had been governess for some years : so the architect Cottinham's pity for the garret-housed artist did not go the length of making him buy his picture !

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IV

ABOUT the year 1850 he left his father's house, where he had been living, while sharing a studio with Madox Brown and Holman Hunt, and took rooms at 14 Chatham Place, Blackfriars : the rooms have since been demolished ; they were situated near the north-east corner of the bridge, and had a fine view over the river. His friendship with the Brownings dates from this period, and the subjects of several of his pictures are to be found in Robert Browning's verse ; among such are " ' Hist ! ' said Kate the Queen," from " Pippa Passes," and " The Laboratory," his first completed water-colour.

After its issue in April 1850, " The Germ " had died, but it had left Rossetti with an established poetical reputation, and it had a brilliant successor in " The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine," which ran throughout the year 1856. The editor was William Fulford ; among his supporters were Burne-Jones, William Morris, and Canon Dixon, all at the time undergraduates, and Rossetti gave them willing help and encouragement. The magazine carried on the doctrines of the Pre-Raphaelite school for the brief year of its existence, and lovers of Rossetti should not fail to make acquaintance with the 776 closely written pages, in double columns, of the now rare volume. It is full of good reading, and contains essays, tales, and poetry, and what are modestly styled

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"notices" of books; these comprise good solid reviews of much that is now standard work; for instance, nineteen pages of double column on Browning's "Men and Women" and twenty-six on the third volume of Ruskin's "Modern Painters."

As far as Rossetti is concerned, the magazine is of special interest in giving a different opening verse to that usually published in "The Burden of Nineveh." The lines are nearer to comic verse than the poet generally allows himself, and show him again as the ironical observer of everyday discomforts he had been while travelling abroad with Holman Hunt; they also show that he had a rapid succession of correct rhymes to his hand when he cared to use them!

In the magazine, below the title of the poem, comes the heading: "Burden. 'Heavy calamity; the chorus of a song.' Dictionary"; and then this opening verse:

I have no taste for polyglot :
At the Museum was my lot,
Just once, to jot and blot and rot
In Babel for I know not what.

I went at two, I left at three.
Round those still floors I tramp'd to win
By the great porch the dirt and din ;
And as I made the last door spin
And issued, they were hoisting in
A wingèd beast from Nineveh.

The poem had been written about six years before, and there had been some talk of pub-

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lishing it in a projected journal called "The Pen."

The opening stanza might represent Rossetti himself, with the contrast between his nature and his circumstances ; those "living eyes" that still can see "dead Greece" so plainly through "London dirt and din." He watches the new treasure, "the wingèd beast from Nineveh," carried to its new home in the British Museum, and every detail of the picture is filled in, as he loved to fill it either with pen or brush. "The wingèd beast" rises before our eyes as we read, plain in every point of hoof and flank and human face : we see, as the poet saw, the life of Nineveh re-create itself before us, until this seems

The very corpse of Nineveh.

Jonah, Sardanapalus, Senacherib, Semiramis, rise in turn before us ; then we seem to watch the "wingèd beast" borne to its place in the Museum, and the contrast is overwhelming—almost from the sublime to the ridiculous :

Now, thou poor god, within this hall
Where the blank windows blind the wall
From pedestal to pedestal,
The kind of light shall on thee fall
Which London takes the day to be :
While school-foundations in the act
Of holiday, three files compact,
Shall learn to view thee as a fact
Connected with that zealous tract :
"Rome,—Babylon and Nineveh."

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The glory of the Old World passes again before the poet's view, and he sees the Museum as the resting-place for all that remains of that glory, united here only as relics : the one thing common to the past and the present is " that dumb presence of the sky." He traces the grandeur of those vanished kingdoms, from the Temptation in the Wilderness till the day when our London, with its present wealth and civilization, may have sunk beneath the sway of some Australian kingdom yet to be ; or further still, till a time when the very presence of the Ninevite god may shake the belief of future ages in the Christianity of to-day.

The day when he, Pride's lord and man's,
Showed all the kingdoms at a glance
To Him before whose countenance
The years recede, the years advance,
And said, " Fall down and worship me " :—
'Mid all the pomp beneath that look,
Then stirred there, haply, some rebuke,
Where to the wind the Salt Pools shook,
And in those tracts, of life forsook,
That knew thee not, O Nineveh !

.

It seemed in one same pageantry
They followed forms which had been erst ;
To pass, till on my sight should burst
That future of the best or worst
When some may question which was first.
Of London or of Nineveh.

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For as that Bull-god once did stand
And watched the burial-clouds of sand,
Till these at last without a hand
Rose o'er his eyes, another land,
And blinded him with destiny :—
So may he stand again ; till now,
In ships of unknown sail and prow,
Some tribe of the Australian plough
Bear him afar,—a relic now
Of London, not of Nineveh !

Or it may chance indeed that when
Man's age is hoary among men,—
His centuries threescore and ten,—
His furthest childhood shall seem then
More clear than later times may be :
Who, finding in this desert place
This form, shall hold us for some race
That walked not in Christ's lowly ways,
But bowed its pride and vowed its praise
Unto the God of Nineveh.

In the last verse we see the poet once more ; he smiles, and then comes the thought that drives out smiles : he scans again the heavy, sculptured sightless figure, and thinks of the irony of such an image standing for God to a mighty nation.

The smile rose first,—anon drew nigh
The thought : . . . Those heavy wings spread high,
So sure of flight, which do not fly ;
That set gaze never on the sky ;
Those sculptured flanks it cannot see ;
Its crown, a brow-contracting load ;

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Its planted feet which trust the sod : . . .

(So grew the image as I trod :)

O Nineveh, was this thy God,

Thine also, mighty Nineveh ?

“ The Blessed Damozel ” was reprinted in “ The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine,” and Rossetti also contributed to it “ Staff and Scrip,” a poem written in modified ballad verse. Of its origin his brother tells us that on September 18, 1849, “ just before starting for the Continent, he wrote to me that he had observed in the ‘ Gesta Romanorum ’ a story, of which he sent me a modified prose version of his own, naming it ‘ The Scrip and Staff ’ : this was the foundation of his poem bearing nearly the same title, and written, I think, not immediately afterwards, but within two or three years ensuing. His letter of September expressed his intention of versifying this tale, and also another story of his own invention, which may, I suppose, have been the ‘ Last Confession.’ ”

“ The Staff and Scrip ” is a poem of mediæval chivalry, and seems to echo Swinburne and William Morris in its rich imagery and high-souled romance. In “ The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine ” it had the following heading, which was, however, omitted in the later editions :

“ How should I your true love know
From another one ? ”

“ By his cockle hat and staff
And his sandal-shoon.”

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The Queen and the Pilgrim come together in the old relation of oppressed and deliverer : he goes to fight her battle against Duke Luke, who has spoiled her lands, and in their first and only meeting the pilgrim recognizes her as the sainted lady of his dreams.

The Queen sat idle by her loom :
She heard the arras stir,
And looked up sadly : through the room
The sweetness sickened her
Of musk and myrrh.

Her women, standing two and two,
In silence combed the fleece.
The Pilgrim said, " Peace be with you,
Lady " ; and bent his knees.
She answered, " Peace."

Her eyes were like the wave within ;
Like water-reeds the poise
Of her soft body, dainty thin ;
And like the water's noise
Her plaintive voice.

For him, the stream had never well'd
In desert tracts malign
So sweet ; nor had he ever felt
So faint in the sunshine
Of Palestine.

Right so, he knew that he saw weep
Each night through every dream
The Queen's own face, confused in sleep
With visages supreme
Not known to him.

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He offers his help against her foe Duke Luke,
and when she hesitates to link him with her
fallen fortunes, he urges his claim,

For my vow's sake.

The ballad throughout is mystical ; and to the
end the exact nature of his vow, which " God
heard . . . there as here," is never told : it
seemed to involve the sacrifice of himself to
her service, and to expect no union between
them until

Not tithed with days' and years' decease
He pays thy wage He owed.

The Queen accepts his service, and he goes
forth to the fight, leaving with " one among her
train " his staff and scrip to be given her on the
morrow : he foresaw his fate, and knew it was
an " in memoriam " gift he sent her. And she
too sent gifts to her knight, to fit him for the
morrow's battle—a sword, a banner, and a
shield.

She sent him a sharp sword, whose belt
About his body there
As sweet as her own arms he felt.
He kissed its blade, all bare,
Instead of her.

She sent him a green banner wrought
With one white lily stem,
To bind his lance with when he fought.
He writ upon the same
And kissed her name.

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She sent him a white shield, whereon
She bade that he should trace
His will. He blent fair hues that shone,
And in a golden space
He kissed her face.

Born of the day that died, that eve
Now dying sank to rest ;
As he, in likewise taking leave,
Once with a heaving breast
Looked to the west.

And there the sunset skies unseal'd,
Like lands he never knew,
Beyond to-morrow's battlefield
Lay open out of view
To ride into.

Perhaps those last two verses are the most musical in the ballad which Canon Dixon called "the finest of all Rossetti's poems, and one of the most glorious writings in the language. It exhibits," he said, "in flawless perfection the gift that he had above all other writers, absolute beauty and pure action."

And in the story the pale Queen Blanchelys among her maidens awaited the issue of the fight, and performed with them the woman's part of watching, fast, and prayer : the rhythm of the verse seems to catch the quiver of their failing voices :

Weak now to them the voice o' the priest
As any trance affords ;
And when each anthem failed and ceas'd,
It seemed that the last chords
Still sang the words.

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Then came the first signs of the finished fight,
eagerly reported from maiden to maiden ; and

the Queen held her breath and heard,
And said, " It is the cry
Of Victory."

But the price of victory had been heavy :

the horses shook the ground :
And in the thick of them
A still band came.

" Oh what do ye bring out of the fight,
Thus hid beneath these boughs ? "
" Thy conquering guest returns to-night,
And yet shall not carouse,
Queen, in thy house."

" Uncover ye his face," she said.
" Oh changed in little space ! "
She cried, " O pale that was so red !
O God, O God of grace !
Cover his face."

His sword was broken in his hand
Where he had kissed the blade.
" O soft steel that could not withstand !
O my hard heart unstayed,
That prayed and prayed ! "

His bloodied banner crossed his mouth
Where he had kissed her name.
" O east, and west, and north, and south,
Fair flew my web, for shame,
To guide Death's aim ! "

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The tints were shredded from his shield

Where he had kissed her face.

“ Oh, of all gifts that I could yield,

Death only keeps its place,

My gift and grace ! ”

Then stepped a damsel to her side,

And spoke, and needs must weep :

“ For his sake, lady, if he died,

He prayed of thee to keep

This staff and scrip.”

And faithfully she kept them : “ that night they hung above her bed,” wet with her tears ; and year after year they held their place amid the changing scenes of the palace life.

And once she woke with a clear mind

That letters writ to calm

Her soul lay in the scrip ; to find

Only a torpid balm

And dust of palm.

In the early edition of the poem, in “ The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine,” a pretty touch of colour is added in the fourth line of that verse, which runs there :

Pink shells : a torpid balm.

So she lived her “ Queen’s life,” faithful always to his memory, until from her bed’s head, where they had hung throughout ten waiting years, the Pilgrim’s staff and scrip were brought to the chapel and hung above her bier ; for hers is

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A Queen's death now : as now they shake
To gusts in chapel dim,—
Hung where she sleeps, not seen to wake
(Carved lovely white and slim),
With them by him.

Stand up to-day, still armed, with her,
Good knight, before His brow
Who then as now was here and there,
Who had in mind thy vow
Then even as now.

The lists are set in Heaven to-day,
The bright pavilions shine ;
Fair hangs thy shield, and none gainsay
The trumpets sound in sign
That she is thine.

Not tithed with days' and years' decease
He pays thy wage He owed,
But with imperishable peace
Here in His own abode,
Thy jealous God.

The poem is mystical to the end : in the story from the "Gesta Romanorum," on which it is founded, and which is called "The Bloody Shirt," the princess who is the heroine has been "stered to synne" by her enemy, before the coming of her champion. But in the "Staff and Scrip" there seems no such suggestion, or it is not made obvious : the two stories resemble one another at the end, and the shirt in the one poem and the staff and scrip in the other hang always above the lady's bed to remind her of

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her dead champion, and to keep her faithful to his memory. The verses breathe to the full that pious mysticism which Rossetti, himself an adherent to no creed, had inherited from Italian ancestry, and which made his few poems which deal with religious subjects rise to such a height of devotional fervour.

The "Staff and Scrip" is written in early ballad form, but, unlike "Troy Town" and "Eden Bower," it has no refrain: it probably contains as large a number of faulty rhymes as any one of Rossetti's poems; the arrangement of the rhymes, three and two, lending itself to this defect. "Dream" rhymes to "supreme" and "him"; "fellowship" to "keep" and "scrip"; "stem" to "name"; "ail" to "well"; "yet" to "great"; and "owed" to "God."

V

BETWEEN the years of "The Germ" and "The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine" Rossetti's reputation as a painter was steadily increasing among those whose judgment was of value. But prices did not run high. In 1853 his staunch Belfast admirer, William McCracken, bought his masterpiece, "Dante on the Anniversary of Beatrice's Death," for the noble sum of £35. It seems to have been about the same time that his famous picture "Found" was begun: this represents a smock-frocked country lover trying

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to raise from the ground the beautiful, dishevelled form of his lost love, whose face gleams wan and marred in the early morning light against the wall by which she crouches. The calf in the cart, imprisoned beneath a net, gives an allegorical force to the picture : it was never finished ; Rossetti worked on it, at intervals, almost to the time of his death. At this period of his career his circle of friends was large, and his magnetic personality such that all hailed him as a leader. He kept to the end of his life the great power he had of inspiring affection ; and in his earlier years he was a genial, warm-hearted, sometimes passionate comrade, in a brilliant band of painters, poets, and thinkers. Owing to the hermit-like existence of his later years, due partly to ill-health, he is apt to be remembered rather as an æsthetic recluse, of morbid and unwholesome habits ; but if one would judge a man by what he was in his prime, even if it end prematurely, this was not his real nature. All will agree that there can be no better judge of his aims and character than his brother, who was also his lifelong friend and companion : these are his words, in connexion with some of Rossetti's early letters : " I think the readers will say that, whatever else Dante Rossetti may have been, he was a quick-blooded, downright-speaking man, with plenty of will and an abundant lack of humbug. People who take an interest in him may depend upon it that the more they learn about him—of an authentic kind—the more will the mascu-

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line traits of his character appear in evidence, and the less will room be left for the notion of a pallid and anæmic æsthete, a candidate for the sunflowers of a Du Maurier design. He did not 'yearn.' All this is said without at all derogating from the fact that in the very essence of his mind and temperament Dante Rossetti was a poet—a poet who expressed himself in verse and in form and colour." It is possible that some of the strong associations that have clung to Rossetti's memory, of dark rooms, unhealthy habits, and morbid fancies, are due to the fact that his magnetic personality drew to him in later life kindred literary spirits of the day ; and that, as his day waned, they penned their last faithful portraits of him with genius, that sheds a merciless, unblinking light on those last pathetic days, that was never cast on his earlier and more vigorous years.

He cannot be judged merely as an English poet ; though he was born in London and spent his life in England, he was by race three parts Italian, and being painter as well as a poet, he strove to write with the same merciless truth to nature with which he strove to paint : had Robert Buchanan realized Rossetti's genius as a painter, he might have seen in it the explanation of much that offended his dry Scottish susceptibilities, and the fatal article in the "Contemporary Review" might never have seen the light. Hall Caine, one of Rossetti's later friends, said of him that he belonged to Italy, not to England, and to the sixteenth or

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even the thirteenth century, rather than the nineteenth ; yet it was not his surroundings that produced this effect, they were British, almost " Cockney " : the glorious insight he showed by pen and brush alike into the spirit of all that Italy has stood for in the past was his by birth, nowhere acquired, nowhere assisted : in hired studios, in his Chelsea house, or among his wild beasts and his sheltering trees, he walked always the same ; a child of the South, who should have lived in the sunshine of that kingdom of Naples whence his father came. When one sees what Italy did for Browning, one cannot but picture what it might have done for Rossetti : his friends tried to send him there, but without success ; he may have dreaded the effect on his own nature of a mere visit there and then the return to England : the fact remains, and it heightens the value of his creative power, that " The Blessed Damozel " was conceived, the " Last Confession " penned, such portraits drawn as " Sister Helen," " Rose Mary," and the women of the sonnets, in no more inspiring atmosphere than that of London smoke and fog.

The figure of the great poet-painter remains perhaps too clearly with us as he was in his later years, worn by suffering, mental and physical ; but we can re-create his portrait in earlier happier years, and see him as he was by nature, cheery, impulsive, and full of quaint humour, in many of his own letters, in those from his friends, and in the pages of the " Pre-

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Raphaelite Journal." From such are the following extracts, only a few from the wealth of material to be enjoyed by students at their leisure.

In 1850 Rossetti writes from Sevenoaks to Mr. John Tupper, one of the associates of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a description of painting in the open air, so vivid and humorous that it is worth inserting as a characteristic production. W. M. Rossetti says: "The subject of my brother's picture was to be 'The Meeting of Dante and Beatrice in the Garden of Eden'; but the landscape background which he now painted was finished up years afterwards for a subject of quite another kind, named 'The Bower-meadow.'" After describing to Mr. Tupper his hasty flight from town, Rossetti goes on:

My canvas is a whopper again, more than seven feet long. Ai! Ai! Hunt [Holman] gets on swimmingly—yesterday, indeed, a full inch over the ankles: I myself had to sketch under the canopy of heaven, without a hat, and with my umbrella tied over my head to my buttonhole—a position which, will you oblige me by remembering, I expressly desired should be selected for my statue—(N.B. Trousers turned up). This last item is chiefly to suit Woolner's ideas of sculpture, should he get the commission. Stephens, being under a course of philosophy, paints in the house. His band is still, however, an inch or so short of Epicurus's. To-day I began painting on my picture in the park; and began to profit by the views of the public thereon. One man told another that I was

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drawing a map, and analysed my outline to that end. One boy was kicked by another for insulting me by doubting that my landscape was meant for a deer. I saw the back of a pair of top-boots, and a cut-away coat ; Lord Amherst, I was told, was sneaking inside, but he refrained from exposing either his person or his ideas on Art. His house is visited with artists in Egyptian swarms, poor wretch ! Hunt remarked, " How disagreeable to enter one of your rooms for the purpose of delivering a soliloquy ; and find a man there behind an easel," which was bobbish for Hunt.

The cold here is awful when it does not rain, and then the rain is awful. " And what shall guard me but my naked love ? "—and a railway rug. . . .

On January 1, 1853, he writes of his picture " Ecce Ancilla Domini," now in the Tate Gallery, to his friend Madox Brown :

This afternoon the blessed white eyesore will be finished. Therefore, if you have any last directions about your pictures now in Green's hands, you had better give them. Yesterday after giving up the angel's head as a bad job (owing to William's malevolent expression), at about one o'clock I took to working it up out of my own intelligence, and got it better by a great deal than it has yet been. I have put a gilt saucer behind his head, which crowns the " China "-ese character of the picture.

It is plain that in his life Rossetti did not lack humour, though little enough of it has clung to his memory, and that for two reasons : one, already stated, the fact that the most life-

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like portraits left of him date from his later days, when bad health and consequent bad habits had warped the natural man, and the other that his work in art and poetry aimed at ideals in which humour had no part. But all the more because this is so, should we try in studying Rossetti's life to recall faithfully the impression of what he was in his prime: a genial companion among friends of whom he formed the moving spirit; one whose jest was heard, and whose laugh rang out even amid the high-souled utterances of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

His ordinary language had little about it of the languid æsthete: Coventry Patmore's poem in the first number of "The Germ" he describes as "stunning"; his own ballad, "The King's Tragedy," while in construction, he speaks of as "a ripper"; he loved the Pre-Raphaelite word "sloshy" for denoting slipshod work; and nowhere can be found a more charming piece of vigorous English than in his letter to his friend Allingham, the Irish poet, on his difficulty in painting one of the "models" in his great picture "Found."

The letter is dated November 1854, and is written from Finchley.

At present I am hard at work out here on my picture, painting the calf and cart. It has been fine clear weather, though cold, till now, but these two days the rain has set in (for good, I fear), and driven me to my wits' end, as even were I inclined to paint notwith-

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standing, the calf would be like a hearth-rug after half an hour's rain ; but I suppose I must turn out to-morrow and try. A very disagreeable part of the business is that I am being obliged to a farmer whom I cannot pay for his trouble in providing calf and all, as he insists on being good-natured. As for the calf, he kicks and fights all the time he remains tied up, which is five or six hours daily, and the view of life induced at his early age by experience in art appears to be so melancholy that he punctually attempts suicide by hanging himself at 3½ daily p.m. At these times I have to cut him down, and then shake him up and lick him like blazes. There *is* a pleasure in it, my dear fellow : the Smithfield drovers are a kind of opium-eaters at it, but a moderate practitioner might perhaps sustain an argument. I hope soon to be back at my rooms, as I have been quite long enough at my "rhumes." (The above joke did service for MacCrac's benefit last night.)

Many of Rossetti's letters to Allingham, Hall Caine, Madox Brown, and to his family are public property now ; and nowhere can there be better seen, side by side with that creative touch of genius with which he dignified the commonest actions and objects, the honest enjoyment he took in the humorous occurrences of everyday life.

We return to his poetry : it is difficult to date exactly much of his work, especially as he altered and added to his poems to an extent beyond that of most authors.

The influence of his friends Swinburne and Morris is clear in such work as "Staff and

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Scrip ; " that of Browning is strongly marked in the long poem, a dramatic monologue in blank verse, " A Last Confession."

The story falls here from the dying lips of an Italian patriot, who gasps out his " last confession " to the listening priest. It is not of his injuries he thinks, of the wound he gave the Austrian,

whose white coat I still made match
With his white face, only the two grew red
As suits his trade.

It is not the approach of death that troubles him, or the dread of mortal pain ; it is the fear lest he will not have strength to make his confession plain ; and so he cries :

Give me a draught of water in that cup ;
My voice feels thick ; perhaps you do not hear ;
But you *must* hear. If you mistake my words
And so absolve me, I am sure the blessing
Will burn my soul. If you mistake my words
And so absolve me, Father, the great sin
Is yours, not mine : mark this : your soul shall burn
With mine for it.

And then in fevered accents he tells the pathetic tale of his life : how while famine devastated his land, he had found upon the hill-side a baby-girl, whose parents had abandoned her to the death by starvation they could not prevent. Boy as he was, he had accepted the charge, and had taken the child to share his own poor home.

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I was young,
Scarce man then, Father : but the cause
 which gave
The wounds I die of now had brought me then
Some wounds already ; and I lived alone,
As any hiding hunted man must live.
It was no easy thing to keep a child
In safety, for herself it was not safe,
And doubled my own danger : but I knew
That God would help me.

Then he goes back to the story of those early days, and their life together among the hills : he tells of his care for her, and of her pretty loving ways, and a forecast of their future rings in one scene that he recalls. He had brought her from the city,

When she was still a merry loving child,—
The earliest gift I mind my giving her ;
A little image of a flying Love
Made of our coloured glass-ware, in his hands
A dart of gilded metal and a torch.

He dwelt on her pleasure in the toy, her eager, childish questions about it, and her wish to hang it herself upon her chamber wall, " fronting her little bed " : so he had held her up in his arms while she drove in the nail with the heavy pruning-hook that did duty as a hammer. Then :

Just as she hung the image on the nail,
It slipped and all its fragments strewed the ground :
And as it fell she screamed, for in her hand
The dart had entered deeply and drawn blood.

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And so her laughter turned to tears : and Oh !
I said, the while I bandaged the small hand,
That I should be the first to make you bleed,
Who love and love and love you ! kissing still
The fingers till I got her safe to bed.
And still she sobbed, Not for the pain at all,
She said, but for the Love, the poor good Love
You gave me. So she cried herself to sleep.

The childish memory of the broken image,
the " poor good Love " that had brought her
nothing but evil, came back to him now as he
lay dying, with the priest waiting to give him
absolution.

His had been the old story : as the waif he
had saved grew from a merry child to a beautiful
maiden, so his feeling for her grew from that
of guardian to lover.

the first love

I had—the father's, brother's love—was changed,
I think, in some wise ; like a holy thought
Which is a prayer before one knows of it.

So the great change took place, though out-
wardly their life ran still in the old groove.

I was a moody comrade to her then,
For all the love I bore her. Italy,
The weeping desolate mother, long has claimed
Her sons' strong arms to lean on, and their hands
To lop the poisonous thicket from her path,
Cleaving her way to light. And from her need
Had grown the fashion of my whole poor life
Which I was proud to yield her, as my father
Had yielded his. And this had come to be

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A game to play, a love to clasp, a hate
To wreak, all things together that a man
Needs for his blood to ripen ; till at times
All else seemed shadows, and I wondered still
To see such life pass muster and be deemed
Time's bodily substance. In those hours, no doubt,
To the young girl my eyes were like my soul,
Dark wells of death-in-life that yearned for day.
And though she ruled me always, I remember
That once when I was thus and she still kept
Leaping about the place and laughing, I
Did almost chide her ; whereupon she knelt
And putting her two hands into my breast
Sang me a song. Are these tears in my eyes ?
'Tis long since I have wept for anything.
I thought that song forgotten out of mind.

But the " rude thing ill-rhymed " comes back
and haunts him, with the bitter contrast of the
singer then and now.

The words of the girl's love-song are in Italian,
and at one time Rossetti thought of omitting
them altogether. His brother, in writing of the
year 1869, says : " On 26th August he wrote
discussing the metre of his Italian song ' La
Bella donna ' (in the ' Last Confession '); to some
laxities in which, as contrary to the scheme of
Italian rhythm, I had started an objection. Soon
afterwards he decided to cut out this song alto-
gether ; but then again relented, and retained it. "

In the poem the dying patriot croons over the
soft lilting notes, and sees again the sweet girl
singer of those early days ; and the patient
priest still waits for the confession.

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You see I cannot, Father ; I have tried,
But cannot, as you see. These twenty times
Beginning, I have come to the same point
And stopped. Beyond, there are but broken words
Which will not let you understand my tale.

At last, however, the tale in all its tragedy is told, dropped out painfully, word by word, from the lips of the stricken lover.

As his heart had filled with passionate love, so hers had seemed to grow empty even of her childhood's feeling for him : he seemed powerless to win back even that early affection. So, at last, she had left him ; and he was thankful for the poor promise of one last interview :

so I stood the day her empty heart
Left her place empty in our home, while yet
I knew not why she went nor where she went
Nor how to reach her : so I stood the day
When to my prayers at last one sight of her
Was granted, and I looked on heaven made pale
With scorn, and heard heaven mock me in that laugh.

“ That laugh ” sounds through the poem, even as it sounded in the disordered brain of the dying man, with a haunting cadence of which one cannot miss the significance.

The promised meeting took place upon the hill-side, and he learned that they met only to part—that his faithful, loving devotion raised in her heart no feelings but those of scorn and ridicule.

His eyes, which have watched her from a child, read below the surface : he saw all that

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the change in her might come to mean ; he realized the depth to which she might sink, when once rid of his sheltering care. So came the end, inevitable in a nature of Southern passions such as his. He had not sought her empty-handed.

I passed a village fair upon my road,
And thought, being empty-handed, I would take
Some little present : such might prove, I said,
Either a pledge between us, or (God help me !)
A parting gift. And there it was I bought
The knife I spoke of, such as women wear.
That day, three hours afterwards, I found
For certain, it must be a parting gift.
And, standing silent now at last, I looked
Into her scornful face ; and heard the sea
Still trying hard to din into my ears
Some speech it knew which still might change her
heart,
If only it could make me understand.
One moment thus. Another, and her face
Seemed further off than the last line of sea,
So that I thought, if now she were to speak
I could not hear her. Then again I knew
All, as we stood together on the sand
At Iglio, in the first thin shade o' the hills.
“ Take it,” I said, and held it out to her,
While the hilt glanced within my trembling hold ;
“ Take it and keep it for my sake,” I said.
Her neck unbent not, neither did her eyes
Move, nor her foot left beating of the sand ;
Only she put it by from her and laughed.

It had been the sound of that laugh which had

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stung him to madness ; he had caught in it the echo of a worthless woman's laugh, heard at the village fair where he had bought the dagger ; it seemed to his frenzied brain the prophecy, in her own voice, of shame such as that woman's which might be hers in time to come.

She had not left me long ;

But all she might have changed to, or might change to
(I know nought since—she never speaks a word—)
Seemed in that laugh. Have I not told you yet,
Not told you all this time what happened, Father,
When I had offered her the little knife,
And bade her keep it for my sake that loved her,
And she had laughed ? Have I not told you yet ?
“ Take it,” I said to her the second time,
“ Take it and keep it.” And then came the fire
That burnt my hand ; and then the fire was blood,
And sea and sky were blood and fire, and all
The day was one red blindness ; till it seemed,
Within the whirling brain's eclipse, that she
Or I or all things bled or burned to death.
And then I found her laid against my feet
And knew that I had stabbed her, and saw still
Her look in falling.

But it was not that look of hers that haunted him, even as Desdemona's last look haunted Othello ; it was the echo of the laugh that drove him to the deed.

I shall hear her laugh

Soon, when she shows the crimson steel to God.

Father, you hear my speech and not her laugh ;
But God heard that. Will God remember all ?

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The poem is the most dramatic of Rossetti's works, and recalls Browning both in story and construction : as in the case of many of Browning's poems, the story is told by the hero, and it is on the elaborate workings of his mind that the interest centres throughout. The girl, the priest, even the figures at the fair, all stand out in clear relief as his thought follows each in turn ; and the action goes backward and forward, in his memory, in point of time, just as is so frequently the case in Browning's dramatic poems.

"The Last Confession" was not published till the volume of "Poems" came out in 1870, but it was begun, at least, almost twenty years before. The story was original, as he said in a letter to his brother in 1849, when he expressed his intention of versifying it.

It is probably to its Italian characters and setting that it owes the fact of being the first of its author's poems to have been translated into Italian. Of the year 1878 W. M. Rossetti writes : "In July Signor Luigi Gamberale sent over from Italy to the author his Italian version of the poem in question, entitled 'Un' Ultima Confessione.' It will be easily understood that this composition, which embodies a story partly (though only subordinately) related to the Italian revolutionary movements which preceded the attainment of national unity, appealed with especial force to an Italian heart and imagination."

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VI

TO this period of Rossetti's work belongs his famous poem "Jenny," akin in subject to his picture "Found." All students should know it, but it does not lend itself to insertion in a work of the present kind. We therefore turn to what is, probably, the best known among his ballads, that of "Sister Helen" : once read, it can never be forgotten. In it we realize the truth of Professor Saintsbury's words, "Rossetti is the magician, though his magic is not always easy to spell out." His metre may be at times irregular, and his rhymes faulty, but in such a work as "Sister Helen" the magician's wand is plain.

The poem does not belong to the ordinary form of early ballad, such as "Eden Bridge" or "Troy Town" ; it creates, in part at least, its own form, through which it pours forth in lurid streams the very spirit of mediæval mysticism and witchcraft. The haunting sound of the semi-religious refrain ; the simple, sad figure of the little brother kept from play to aid his sister's ghastly work ; the despairing petitioners who kneel in turn beneath the tower, and go their way, defeated, one by one ; above all the character of Helen herself, triumphant in her revenge, pitiless and, at the same time, hopeless—go to make such a whole as English ballad poetry has rarely surpassed.

The scene is laid in Scotland, and deals with

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the old superstition of taking your enemy's life by melting his waxen image before the fire.

The opening stanzas, in which the story is made clear, were not part of the original poem. In speaking of the year 1869, W. M. Rossetti writes : " He . . . referred to his having added an opening stanza to ' Sister Helen,' for clearness sake " ; and probably the last letter he ever wrote, on March 5, 1882—he died on the 9th of the following month—to his friend and biographer, Mr. Joseph Knight, relates to further additions to the poem : " In ' Sister Helen ' (which, I remember, you always liked) there is an addition which (though it sounds alarming at first) has quite secured Watts's suffrage." The introduction of Keith of Ewern's newly wedded bride among the suppliants for his life was evidently the change to which he referred, as the verses relating to her do not occur in the edition of 1870, nor does the verse which tells of Keith's sickening :

(Three days ago, on his marriage-morn.)

We quote from the later edition :

" Why did you melt your waxen man,
Sister Helen ?

To-day is the third since you began."

" The time was long, yet the time ran,
Little brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Three days to-day, between Hell and Heaven !)

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“ But if you have done your work aright,

Sister Helen,

You'll let me play, for you said I might.”

“ Be very still in your play to-night,

Little brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Third night, to-night, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ You said it must melt ere vesper-bell,

Sister Helen ;

If now it be molten, all is well.”

“ Even so,—nay, peace ! you cannot tell,

Little brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Oh what is this between Hell and Heaven ?)

“ Oh, the waxen knave was plump to-day,

Sister Helen ;

How like dead folk he has dropped away ! ”

“ Nay now, of the dead what can you say,

Little brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

What of the dead, between Hell and Heaven ?)

“ See, see, the sunken pile of wood,

Sister Helen,

Shines through the thinned wax red as blood ! ”

“ Nay now, when looked you yet on blood,

Little brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

How pale she is, between Hell and Heaven !)

Then the sister, worn out with her ghastly work, sinks to rest upon the ground ; and the faithful little brother climbs the balcony and

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becomes a veritable Sister Ann, to report the approach of all who seek the tower.

But it is Sister Helen herself who is the first to catch the sound of horsemen in the distance,

“ Three horsemen that ride terribly,”

and one outrides the other two, and gains the tower alone.

“ Oh ! it's Keith of Eastholm rides so fast,

Sister Helen,

For I know the white mane on the blast.”

“ The hour has come, has come at last,

Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Her hour at last, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ The wind is loud, but I hear him cry,

Sister Helen,

That Keith of Ewern's like to die.”

“ And he and thou, and thou and I,

Little brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

And they and we, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Three days ago, on his marriage-morn,

Sister Helen,

He sickened, and lies since then forlorn.”

“ For bridegroom's side is the bride a thorn,

Little brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Cold bridal cheer, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Three days and nights he has lain abed,

Sister Helen,

And he prays in torment to be dead.”

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“ The thing may chance, if he have prayed,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
If he have prayed, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ But he has not ceased to cry to-day,
Sister Helen,
That you should take your curse away.”

“ My prayer was heard,—he need but pray,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Shall God not hear, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ But he says, till you take back your ban,
Sister Helen,
His soul would pass, yet never can.”

“ Nay then, shall I slay a living man,
Little brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
A living soul, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ But he calls for ever on your name,
Sister Helen,
And says that he melts before a flame.”

“ My heart for his pleasure fared the same,
Little brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven !)

Then comes the second brother, Keith of Westholm, with his “ white plume on the blast ” : he tells the same awful tale and prays the same prayer, only to be met by the pitiless refrain,

Love turned to hate, between Hell and Heaven !

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And now the pathetic figure of the Chief himself, Keith of Keith, kneels below the balcony, and his broken voice begs for his son's pardon, that at last the soul may depart in peace.

" Oh, it's Keith of Keith now that rides fast,
Sister Helen,

For I know the white hair on the blast."

" The short, short hour will soon be past,
Little brother ! "

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven !)

" He looks at me and he tries to speak,
Sister Helen,

But oh ! his voice is sad and weak ! "

" What here should the mighty Baron seek,
Little brother ? "

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven ?)

" Oh his son still cries, if you forgive,
Sister Helen,

The body dies but the soul shall live."

" Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,
Little brother ! "

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven ?)

" Oh, he prays you, as his heart would rive,
Sister Helen,

To save his dear son's soul alive."

" Fire cannot slay it, it shall thrive,
Little brother ! "

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven !)

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“ He cries to you, kneeling in the road,
Sister Helen,
To go with him for the love of God ! ”
“ The way is long to his son’s abode,
Little brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The way is long, between Hell and Heaven !)

Then, when the father’s prayer is refused,
last of all comes Helen’s own supplanter, the
three days’ bride, the golden-haired Lady of
Ewern ; and Helen’s awful triumph is complete.

“ Pale, pale her cheeks, that in pride did glow,
Sister Helen,
’Neath the bridal-wreath three days ago.”
“ One morn for pride and three days for woe,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Three days, three nights, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Her clasped hands stretch from her bending head,
Sister Helen ;
With the loud wind’s wail her sobs are wed.”
“ What wedding-strains hath her bridal-bed,
Little brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What strain but death’s, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ She may not speak, she sinks in a swoon,
Sister Helen,
She lifts her lips and gasps on the moon.”
“ Oh ! might I but hear her soul’s blithe tune,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Her woe’s dumb cry, between Hell and Heaven !)

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But for her, least of all, has Helen no mercy ; so the brothers lift her gently from the snow, and the sad cortège turns and goes back whence it came, leaving the black deed to its consummation.

And, in the presence of the two actors with which the poem opened, so it now closes :

“ See, see, the wax has dropped from its place,
Sister Helen,

And the flames are winning up apace ! ”

“ Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Ah ! what white thing at the door has cross’d,
Sister Helen ?

Ah ! what is this that sighs in the frost ? ”

“ A soul that’s lost as mine is lost,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven !)

The poem stands alone among English ballads, unclassed and unclassable ; the creation of a genius which knew no school ; breathing in every sombre picture, in every haunting significant refrain, the weird wild spirit of mediæval superstition and revenge. Perhaps one of the minor details in Buchanan’s attack on Rossetti in the “ Contemporary Review ” in 1871, which shows most plainly his absolute failure to grasp the real meaning and construction of the

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"Poems," is that he turns to ridicule the refrain in "Sister Helen" as a piece of mere wordy monotony. To anyone who studies and understands the poem, there can be nothing in it more striking than the way in which those final lines of "Greek Chorus" sum up the awful significance of each verse in turn, till they end in the inevitable wail of despair of the final line :

Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven !

VII

From the tragic story of Helen's love we turn to a love-story also tragic in its kind, that of the poet himself. About the year 1850 Rossetti first met the lady destined to become his wife, Miss Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal. She was the daughter of Charles Siddal, a cutler of Sheffield, and when Rossetti first made her acquaintance she was employed in London as a milliner's assistant. The pure calm beauty of her face, in its wonderful setting of copper-coloured hair, first attracted him ; and that beauty is known to all by the many portraits he has left of her in his pictures, of which the best known perhaps is the "Beata Beatrix," now in the Tate Gallery. She became at first his model, and shortly his pupil, for she was herself an artist of no mean order ; and Rossetti, who thought highly of her work, always encouraged her with the generous appre-

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ciation he was so ready to bestow on fellow artists. Their love-story is known to all, their unity of interests, and their devotion, darkened always by the shadow of consumption, which threatened her life throughout the whole of their long engagement. Rossetti was a poor man, and health and finance alike combined against their union, which did not take place till ten years after their first meeting : those years were filled with mixed sunshine and shadows, as many of the references to Miss Siddall in his letters show.

On August 25, 1853, he wrote to Mr. Madox Brown, after Miss Siddal had been engaged on a water-colour portrait of Tennyson : " Lizzy has made a perfect wonder of her portrait, which is nearly done, and which I think we shall send to the Winter Exhibition. She has been very ill, though, lately." On March 30, 1854, he wrote to the same friend : " Lizzy has been very unwell lately. I have introduced her to the Howitts, and we have spent several evenings there. They are quite fond of her, and most delighted with her productions. I have also brought her and my sister Christina together, as our family are now in London again.

" The Howitts insisted on Lizzy's seeing a Dr. Wilkinson [an eminent homœopathist of the day], a friend of theirs, and I believe an eminent man. He finds that the poor dear has contracted a curvature of the spine, and says she ought not to paint at present " ; with charac-

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teristic disregard of health, he added, "but this, of course, she must."

On January 23, 1855, in a letter to William Allingham he mentioned a friend of theirs being ordered to Rome for her health; and added, "I wish there were any Rome for my good pupil, whose life might matter a little. She bears the cold weather, however, on the whole, better than I looked for, and of course progresses always as an artist. She is now doing two lovely water-colours (from 'We are Seven' and 'La Belle Dame sans merci')—having found herself always thrown back for lack of health and wealth in the attempts she had made to begin a picture." "Thrown back for lack of health and wealth" sums up the darker side of the lives of these gifted lovers.

Ruskin's recognition of Miss Siddal's powers was a great pleasure to Rossetti, who wrote to Allingham a few months after the last letter: "About a week ago Ruskin saw and bought on the spot every scrap of designs hitherto produced by Miss Siddal. He declared that they were far better than mine, or almost than anyone's, and seemed quite wild with delight at getting them. He asked me to name a price for them, after asking and hearing that they were for sale; and I, of course, considering the immense advantage of getting them into his hands, named a very low price, £25, which he declared to be too low even for a low price, and increased to £30. He is going to have them splendidly mounted and bound

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together in gold ; and no doubt this will be a real opening for her, as it is already a great assistance and encouragement." It is characteristic of the eagerness of his nature, and the place which Art always held with him, that his anxiety about Miss Siddal's health seemed subordinate to his longing for her artistic recognition. His whole-hearted appreciation of her work, and the picture of their life together, painting side by side, cannot but remind us of two of their most gifted contemporaries to whom Rossetti makes a charmingly quaint allusion in another of his letters to Allingham, dated 1856 : " The Brownings are long gone back now, and with them one of my delights—an evening resort where I never felt unhappy. How large a part of the real world, I wonder, are those two small people ?—taking meanwhile so little room in any railway carriage, and hardly needing a double bed at the inn."

Rossetti writes constantly of Miss Siddal to his family and his friends, usually as Lizzie or Liz, sometimes by the playful pet name Guggum, and that at times abbreviated to G. ; but the shadow of her delicacy, which shortened their married life, darkened the whole of their long engagement.

In the course of 1860 the wedding was at length fixed, but even then it had to be twice postponed, owing to the illness of the bride. They were married on May 23 of that year, in St. Clement's Church, Hastings, and the same day Rossetti wrote to Madox Brown, " All hail

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from Lizzie and myself, just back from church." They made a tour in France and Belgium, and then returned to the lodgings in Blackfriars, which had been prepared for the coming of the bride. Their married life ran out its brief and tragic course within two years. A dead baby was born in March 1861, and the mother's health failed rapidly. The form of consumption from which she suffered brought with it violent pain, and to relieve this she had recourse to laudanum. She died from an overdose of the drug in February 1862, after an engagement of nearly ten years and a married life of less than two.

The tragic scene over her dead body is known to all. Rossetti's passion of grief was added to by the feelings of remorse inevitable in such a nature as his. He came to her, as she lay in her coffin, bringing in his hand the little volume into which, at her bidding, he had copied his poems. They were hers, he said, they had been written for her, and she must take them with her; and he laid the book beside the beautiful face he had so often painted, and they were buried together.

Some of these poems, as already mentioned, had been published in magazines, but of many no second copy existed; and for seven years they lay in the grave in Highgate Cemetery, while Rossetti seemed to give up writing altogether and to devote himself exclusively to painting. Much of his best artistic work belongs to these years: of his famous picture,

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the "Beata Beatrix," W. M. Rossetti writes :
"It represents Beatrice in a semi-supernatural trance, ominous and symbolic of death, but not in any sense dead ; and was painted some while after the death of my brother's wife, probably beginning in 1863, with portraiture so faithfully reminiscent that one might almost say she sat, in spirit and to the mind's eye, for the face."

It is far more difficult to fix the dates of Rossetti's poems than of his pictures ; and the fact that he frequently remodelled them, changed some stanzas and added others dealing with later events, often prevents the possibility of fixing their dates by internal evidence. "The Portrait," for instance, contains obvious allusions to the memory of his wife, but the original poem was one of those buried with her. We insert it in full.

This is her picture as she was :

It seems a thing to wonder on,
As though mine image in the glass
Should tarry when myself am gone.
I gaze until she seems to stir,—
Until mine eyes almost aver

That now, even now, the sweet lips part
To breathe the words of the sweet heart :
And yet the earth is over her.

Alas ! even such the thin-drawn ray
That makes the prison-depths more rude,
The drip of water night and day
Giving a tongue to solitude.

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Yet only this, of love's whole prize,
Remains ; save what in mournful guise
Takes counsel with my soul alone,—
Save what is secret and unknown,
Below the earth, above the skies.

In painting her I shrined her face
'Mid mystic trees, where light falls in
Hardly at all ; a covert place
Where you might think to find a din
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame
Wandering, and many a shape whose name
Not itself knoweth, and old dew,
And your own footsteps meeting you,
And all things going as they came.

A deep dim wood ; and there she stands
As in that wood that day : for so
Was the still movement of her hands
And such the pure line's gracious flow.
And passing fair the type must seem,
Unknown the presence and the dream.
'Tis she : though of herself, alas !
Less than her shadow on the grass
Or than her image in the stream.

That day we met there, I and she
One with the other all alone ;
And we were blithe, yet memory
Saddens those hours, as when the moon
Looks upon daylight. And with her
I stooped to drink the spring-water,
Athirst where other waters sprang :
And where the echo is, she sang,—
My soul another echo there.

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But when that hour my soul won strength
For words whose silence wastes and kills,
Dull raindrops smote us, and at length
Thundered the heat within the hills.
That eve I spoke those words again
Beside the pelted window-pane ;
And there she hearkened what I said,
With under-glances that surveyed
The empty pastures blind with rain.

Next day the memories of these things,
Like leaves through which a bird has flown,
Still vibrated with Love's warm wings ;
Till I must make them all my own
And paint this picture. So, 'twixt ease
Of talk and sweet long silences,
She stood among the plants in bloom
At windows of a summer room,
To feign the shadow of the trees.

And as I wrought, while all above
And all around was fragrant air,
In the sick burthen of my love
It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there
Beat like a heart among the leaves.
O heart that never beats nor heaves,
In that one darkness lying still,
What now to thee my love's great will
Or the fine web the sunshine weaves ?

For now doth daylight disavow
Those days—nought left to see or hear.
Only in solemn whispers now
At night-time these things reach mine ear ;

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When the leaf-shadows at a breath
Shrink in the road, and all the heath,
 Forest and water, far and wide,
 In limpid starlight glorified,
Lie like the mystery of death.

Last night at last I could have slept,
 And yet delayed my sleep till dawn,
Still wandering. Then it was I wept :
 For unawares I came upon
Those glades where once she walked with me :
And as I stood there suddenly,
 All wan with traversing the night,
 Upon the desolate verge of light
Yearned loud the iron-bosomed sea.

Even so, where Heaven holds breath and hears
 The beating heart of Love's own breast,
Where round the secret of all spheres
 All angels lay their wings to rest,—
How shall my soul stand rapt and awed,
When, by the new birth borne abroad
 Throughout the music of the suns,
 It enters in her soul at once
And knows the silence there for God !

Here with her face doth memory sit
 Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,
Till other eyes shall look from it,
 Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,
Even than the old gaze tenderer :
While hopes and aims long lost with her
 Stand round her image side by side,
 Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
About the Holy Sepulchre.

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One sees in this poem with what a master-hand Rossetti could fit his garland woven once for an imaginary head, to one which was not imaginary. The lines are full of his wife's memory, and of their life together. Mr. Knight has cleverly suggested the identity of the scene touched on in verse vi with that of a stormy afternoon in April 1854, when Rossetti and Miss Siddal sheltered together from the rain in a farmhouse near Hastings, and carved their monograms upon the window panel. In verse iv, lines 3 and 4 specially reproduce the charm of Miss Siddal's beauty, and they could only have been penned by an artist; while in the last verse but one he seems to return for comfort to his own creation of earlier days, and more than one echo comes to us from the Heaven of the "Blessed Damozel."

VIII

SOON after his wife's death Rossetti left the house in Blackfriars, and removed, after a short interval, to No. 16 Cheyne Walk, with which his memory will be always associated. For a little while he shared the house with his brother, Swinburne, and George Meredith, but this arrangement did not last long. Meredith left first, then Swinburne; W. M. Rossetti stayed on until his marriage in 1874.

Swinburne's acquaintance Rossetti had made in Oxford in 1857, while he was painting the

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frescoes there for the "Union" which were to illustrate scenes from the "Morte d'Arthur." Many of his friendships dated from that time, when Morris, Burne-Jones, and Val Prinsep were among his fellow enthusiasts; and the fact that the walls of the "Union" were not fit for the work, being new and unprepared, and that the priceless pictures—painted for love, not money—peeled away and are now unrecognizable, is another of the many disappointing little incidents in Rossetti's life.

Besides the house in Cheyne Walk he shared Kelmscott Manor, near Lechlade, for some time as a country residence with William Morris, and he also paid visits among his friends in Scotland and elsewhere. There have been so many descriptions given of 16 Cheyne Walk, its artistic but gloomily furnished chambers, and its oddly stocked garden, that one more seems unnecessary. It is in those surroundings that his figure has grown to be most familiar. The house was old and handsome, and Rossetti filled it with priceless treasures in furniture, pottery, and bronzes. There he would sit among his friends, at the dinners when he made a most genial host, surrounded by wonders of Japanese and Chinese art, old oak, blue china, and fine old metalwork of many kinds. And later on, in the studio, he would charm the same friends with that vivid personal magnetism of which he was possessed, and which drew men to lavish on him deep and ungrudging love. The beauty of his voice and the power of his recitation were

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among his noted personal gifts, and he would lie full length on a sofa in his studio, surrounded by his pictures and his friends, and repeat his own ballads, or those of other poets, giving always generous appreciation to the work of his fellow bards.

A fine trait in his character was his recognition of good work by others, and in this he always showed a ready insight. The story of his discovery in 1860 of FitzGerald's hitherto neglected masterpiece "Omar Khayyám" is well known ; we give it in Swinburne's words : " Two friends of Rossetti's—Mr. Whitley Stokes and Mr. Ormsby—told him (he told me) of this wonderful little pamphlet for sale on a stall in St. Martin's Lane, to which Mr. Quaritch, finding that the British public unanimously declined to give a shilling for it, had relegated it to be disposed of for a penny. Having read it, Rossetti and I invested upwards of sixpence apiece—or possibly threepence, I would not wish to exaggerate our extravagance—in copies at that not exorbitant price. Next day we thought we might get some more for presents among our friends, but the man at the stall asked twopence ! Rossetti expostulated with him in terms of such humorously indignant remonstrance as none but he could ever have commanded. We took a few, and left him. In a week or two, if I am not much mistaken, the remaining copies were sold at a guinea ; I have since—as I dare say you have—seen copies offered for still more absurd prices. I kept my

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pennyworth (the tidiest copy of the lot), and have it still."

Rossetti loved pets, and strange beasts dwelt in that shady garden on the Chelsea Embankment. There were two kangaroos, a peacock which screeched itself to liberty through the complaints of the neighbours, a beautiful fallow deer, two wandering and mischievous armadillos, and a snarling, ill-tempered racoon whom Rossetti would show off, holding him by the scruff of the neck and asking, "Does it not look like a devil?" Among these queer creatures the poet would wander contentedly, exhibiting them to his friends and expatiating on their various beauties. Of the zebu, a wild little fellow about the size of a small Shetland pony, the only tale is told in which the master fared ill among his beasts: according to Whistler, the zebu once caused Rossetti to run, and might have done him serious harm had not its efforts been luckily hampered by the tree to which it had been tethered, and which it had uprooted in its frantic efforts to attack its master. Another of his pets was the godly minded parrot who sat beside him one Sunday morning while the bells of St. Luke's Church rang for service, and suddenly adjured his master, "You ought to be in church now!"

Many of his best-known pictures, both in oil and water-colour, date from Rossetti's residence in Cheyne Walk: he would keep pictures on hand for years, just as he did with many of his poems, and would touch and retouch them in

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the same way ; he would also work over and over again at the same subject, as in the case of his pictures on " Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee " and " Found," of which he planned the subject in the year 1853, and at which he was still working shortly before his death. One of the subjects on which he both painted and wrote was " Lilith," the snake-like woman, the legendary first wife of Adam. The rather uncanny mysticism of the legend was just such as would appeal to him, but there is little connexion between Lilith's figure in his two poems and the golden-haired lady whom he painted both in oil and water-colour. In the volume of 1870, among the Sonnets for Pictures, appeared that entitled " Lilith " : it reappeared in the later editions of his works under the name " Body's Beauty," No. LXXVIII in " The House of Life." There is only one change in the later form, that of " web " instead of " net " in line 6, an obvious improvement both in sense and sound.

Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told

(The witch he loved before the gift of Eve)

That, ere the snake's, her sweet tongue could deceive,
And still she sits, young while the earth is old,

And, subtly of herself contemplative,

Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

The rose and poppy are her flowers ; for where

Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare ?

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Lo ! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck
bent
And round his heart one strangling golden hair.

Lilith's snake-like form seems to coil in every line of the sonnet, and leaves one with almost a feeling of suffocation at the imagery of the last line.

The poem "Eden Bower," written in early ballad form, with a simple refrain after the first line of each verse, gives the whole legend with the minute care for detail beloved by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

It was Lilith the wife of Adam :

(Sing Eden Bower !)

Not a drop of her blood was human,
But she was made like a soft sweet woman.

Lilith stood on the skirts of Eden ;

(Alas the hour !)

She was the first that thence was driven ;
With her was hell and with Eve was heaven.

In the ear of the snake said Lilith :

(Sing Eden Bower !)

"To thee I come when the rest is over ;
A snake was I when thou wast my lover.

"I was the fairest snake in Eden.

(Alas the hour !)

By the earth's will, new form and feature
Made me a wife for the earth's new creature."

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Thus she cries to her old lover, as she comes back from the side of Adam whom she has lost : she looks again on their joys together in Eden ; and she calls on the mighty serpent, " the King-snake of Eden," to help her in avenging herself for all she has forfeited.

" Help, sweet Snake, sweet lover of Lilith !

(Alas the hour !)

And let God learn how I loved and hated
Man in the image of God created.

" Help me once against Eve and Adam !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

Help me once for this one endeavour,
And then my love shall be thine for ever !

" Strong is God, the fell foe of Lilith :

(Alas the hour !)

Nought in heaven or earth may affright Him ;
But join thou with me and we will smite Him.

" Strong is God, the great God of Eden :

(Sing Eden Bower !)

Over all He made He hath power ;
But lend me thou thy shape for an hour !

" Lend thy shape for the hate of Adam !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

That he may wail my joy that forsook him,
And curse the day when the bride-sleep took him."

Then she unfolds her evil plan : she makes the snake creep close to her, and listen

" And learn what deed remains for our doing.

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“ Thou didst hear when God said to Adam :

(Sing Eden Bower !)

‘ Of all this wealth I have made thee warden ;
Thou’rt free to eat of the trees of the garden :

“ ‘ Only of one tree eat not in Eden ;

(Alas the hour !)

All save one I give to thy free will,
The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.’

“ O my love, come nearer to Lilith !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

In thy sweet folds bind me and bend me,
And let me feel the shape thou shalt lend me.

“ In thy shape I’ll go back to Eden ;

(Alas the hour !)

In these coils that Tree will I grapple,
And stretch this crowned head forth by the apple.”

Then Lilith foretells the scenes in Paradise :
Eve’s temptation, her tempting of Adam, and
their fall ; God’s visit to the garden in the
evening ; their vain excuses, and their expulsion
from the paradise into which, through them,
sin has now entered. There is something akin
to the grand simplicity of the Bible itself in the
lines which foretell the Fall of Man. Lilith
speaks to Eve :

“ Nay, but on that great day in Eden,

(Sing Eden Bower !)

By the help that in this wise Tree is,
God knows well ye shall be as He is.”

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"Then Eve shall eat and give unto Adam ;

(Alas the hour !)

And then they both shall know they are naked,
And their hearts ache as my heart hath achèd.

"Ay, let them hide 'mid the trees of Eden,

(Sing Eden Bower !)

As in the cool of the day in the garden
God shall walk without pity or pardon.

"Hear, thou Eve, the man's heart in Adam !

(Alas the hour !)

Of his brave words hark to the bravest :—

'This the woman gave that thou gavest.'

"Hear Eve speak, yea list to her, Lilith !

(Sing Eden Bower !)

Feast thine heart with words that shall sate it—

'This the serpent gave and I ate it.'

"O proud Eve, cling close to thine Adam,

(Alas the hour !)

Driven forth as the beasts of his naming

By the sword that for ever is flaming."

So Lilith, the terrible snake-woman, foretells the Fall of Man ; and then, from the Bible narrative, the ballad passes to a scene which is purely imaginary, that of her reunion with the serpent after her evil purpose has been accomplished. Rossetti gives every detail of the picture, with that perfection of touch which is his alike on page or canvas. Nothing could be more dramatic than the horrible triumph that rings in their cries over Eden and her fallen inmates.

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"On that day on the skirts of Eden,
(Alas the hour !)
In thy shape shall I glide back to thee,
And in my shape for an instant view thee.

"But when thou'rt thou and Lilith is Lilith,
(Sing Eden Bower !)
In what bliss past hearing and seeing
Shall each one drink of the other's being ?

"With cries of 'Eve !' and 'Eden !' and 'Adam !'
(Alas the hour !)
How shall we mingle our love's caresses,
I in thy coils, and thou in my tresses ?

"With those names, ye echoes of Eden,
(Sing Eden Bower !)
Fire shall cry from my heart that burneth,—
'Dust he is and to dust returneth !' "

Then again the scene reverts to the Bible narrative, and each detail is closely followed. Once more is seen "the garden planted eastward in Eden," but the river no longer waters the garden, "thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth," and the east of the garden is now guarded by the "flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

"In the planted garden eastward in Eden,
(Sing Eden Bower !)
Where the river goes forth to water the garden,
The springs shall dry and the soil shall harden.

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“ Yea, where the bride-sleep fell upon Adam,

(Alas the hour !)

None shall hear when the storm-wind whistles
Through roses choked among thorns and thistles.

“ Yea, beside the east-gate of Eden,

(Sing Eden Bower !)

Where God joined them and none might sever,
The sword turns this way and that for ever.

“ What of Adam cast out of Eden ?

(Alas the hour !)

Lo ! with care like a shadow shaken,
He tills the hard earth whence he was taken.

“ What of Eve too, cast out of Eden ?

(Sing Eden Bower !)

Nay, but she, the bride of God's giving,
Must yet be mother of all men living.”

And the ballad ends with a prophecy of the birth of Cain and Abel, and of the terrible part which sin, now born into the world, is to play in their intercourse together.

“ The first is Cain and the second Abel :

(Sing Eden Bower !)

The soul of one shall be made thy brother,
And thy tongue shall lap the blood of the other.”

(Alas the hour !)

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IX

ROSSETTI was not five-and-thirty when his short married life came to an end ; the early years in the Chelsea house were those of his prime, although few poets produced such flawless work at so early an age as he had done. All know, from his many portraits, his appearance at this time—the great forehead and strongly formed brows, the deep-set grey eyes, the dark curly hair and short beard, and the thick moustache which shaded the mouth. His figure, slender in youth, was at this time inclining to stoutness, much to his own annoyance, but in later years ill-health removed any such tendency : in height he was just under 5 ft. 8 in. His dress was that of the type to which he belonged, and his portraits generally show him clad in a large loose-fitting coat, suitable for work in a studio. It was perhaps unfortunate for him that, much to his own regret, he was never able to become a smoker ; tobacco might have done something to soothe him in the inevitable worries and anxieties of life, which went hardly with such a temperament as his. He was no newspaper reader, and took no part and little interest in contemporary politics, but he was full of interest and generous sympathy for all workers in his own line. He was an enthusiastic though limited reader as regards poets of the past, and his special favourites among them appear in

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many of his letters. "You can never say too much about Coleridge for me," he writes to Mr. Hall Caine, "for I worship him on the right side of idolatry." To the same friend he said, "The three greatest imaginations are Shakespeare, Coleridge, and Shelley." Keats he read from boyhood, and of him he wrote that "he was, among all his contemporaries who established their names, the one true heir of Shakespeare." And again he writes of him to Mr. Hall Caine: "Keats hardly died so much too early—not at all if there had been any danger of his taking to the modern habit eventually—treating material as product, and shooting it all out as it comes. Of course, however, he wouldn't; he was getting always choicer and simpler, and my favourite piece in his work is 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'—I suppose about his last."

Rossetti has left records of his admiration for Blake too, and for the ill-fated Chatterton whose poems he had read as a boy. On the other hand, he never fully appreciated Wordsworth, whose mind and methods were too far removed from his own to attract him. Mr. Hall Caine declares that Rossetti frequently said to him, "I grudge Wordsworth every vote he gets"; and that he wrote: "As to Wordsworth, no one regards the great Ode with more special and unique homage than I do, as a thing absolutely alone of its kind among all greatest things. I cannot say that anything else of his with which I have ever been familiar (and I suffer from long

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disuse of all familiarity with him) seems at all on a level with this."

The poets of his own day, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne and the rest, were his friends, and to their work he gave generous and ungrudging admiration. From Browning's poems, as we have noted, he took many subjects for pictures, and it was in Browning's London house that his well-known sketch was taken of Tennyson reading aloud his own poem "Maud." The sketch is reproduced in Dunn's "Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," with the comment, "Whoever possesses the little sketch ought to prize it very highly." It is sad to follow the fate of the little sketch, which connects three such great names in poetry, and to mark that the sense in which Mr. Dunn's words came true was not by any means that which he anticipated. Rossetti gave the original to Browning, and the "Athenæum" for May 10, 1913, contains the following entry, under the heading "The Browning Sale": "D. G. Rossetti, Pen-and-ink portrait of Tennyson reading 'Maud,' Sept. 27, 1855, £225."

So the years passed on at Cheyne Walk, and Rossetti spent them in hard work and intercourse with his friends. These friends varied at different periods of his life: his friendships were deep and warm, but not always lasting. From both Browning and Ruskin he was estranged in later years; his letters to Allingham came to a somewhat abrupt end, and this was the case with others among his correspon-

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dents. He was a man of moods ; of strong emotions and limited interests and outlook, intensely sensitive to misconception and intolerant of all with whom he disagreed. But both his feelings and his friends had united during the last few years in urging him to one important act, that of the recovery of his buried volume of poems. Leave was accordingly obtained from the Home Secretary, Mr. Bruce, to open the coffin of Elizabeth Rossetti ; the poet spent a sorrowful and solemn night while the ceremony was carried out, and the face he had so often painted was once more exposed to view, still beautiful as in life. After treatment by an expert, the volume was placed in Rossetti's hands, and by him prepared for publication with considerable changes and additions.

His publisher, to the end of his life, was Mr. F. S. Ellis, in 1870 of King Street, Covent Garden, and later of New Bond Street ; it is pleasant to recall the testimony Mr. W. M. Rossetti bears as to their relations : " My brother had, from first to last, the utmost reason for satisfaction in having come to terms with Mr. Ellis, who acted with consistent liberality and friendly zeal, and who relieved him from all trouble in the matter more onerous than that of receiving cheques for author's royalty on sales, at punctual intervals."

One memorable feature in Rossetti's life was his warm family affection, and the way that loving sympathy and appreciation from his mother and his gifted brother and sister cheered

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him in every phase of his career, and were round him to the end. His father had died in 1854, but to the end of his life he and his son had been on affectionate terms of intimacy. The warm affection existing between the different generations of the family is illustrated in a letter of Gabriele Rossetti's to his son, written a few months before his death: "We shall return to London on the 25th of March, and we return for ever. I trust to find in good health you, my dearest son, and your brother and your sister Maria. And you will rejoice in again seeing dear Christina, and your aged father, who will soon go underground with beloved Polidori. I learned with pleasure that you and William and Maria all assisted at his last moments. Dearest father-in-law and friend, how much I love you!"

The letter ends: "Be heedful of your profession, dearly beloved son, and let the public see what you are capable of.

"Your loving father,

"GABRIELE ROSSETTI"

It was of his son's pictures the father was thinking when he wrote the last words, but he would have been proud had he lived to see the welcome accorded by the "public" to his son's first volume of poems.

The book appeared in the end of April 1870, and was called simply "Poems": it was dedicated to his brother. Its success was so immediate that on May 4 Rossetti wrote to his

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mother : " Dear Old Darling of 70,—You will be glad to hear that the first edition is almost exhausted, and that Ellis is going to press with the second thousand. It will have brought me £300 in less than a month." The volume ran rapidly through seven editions, and was reviewed with almost unmixed eulogy on every side. Swinburne's enthusiastic praise in the " Fortnightly Review " gave Rossetti especial pleasure.

Some of the poems, as has been mentioned, had already appeared in " The Germ," the " Oxford and Cambridge Magazine," and other periodicals ; but most of these poems were now altered or added to, and many others were published for the first time. Among these was the lyric " Love's Nocturne," which Rossetti had probably offered in early days to Thackeray, the original editor of the " Cornhill Magazine " ; but in that magazine neither this nor any other poem by Rossetti ever appeared. Akin in subject to " Love's Nocturne " is the beautiful little poem " First Love Remembered," which also appeared now for the first time. The arrangement of rhymes in it, which is that of Tennyson's " In Memoriam," is very unusual with this metre. The first and fourth lines rhyme, and the second and third, as in Tennyson's poem ; but, unlike his lines of equal length, the first and the third here contain four feet, the second and the fourth only three.

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FIRST LOVE REMEMBERED

Peace in her chamber, wheresoe'er
It be, a holy place :
The thought still brings my soul such grace
As morning meadows wear.

Whether it still be small and light,
A maid's who dreams alone,
As from her orchard-gate the moon
Its ceiling showed at night :

Or whether, in a shadow dense
As nuptial hymns invoke,
Innocent maidenhood awoke
To married innocence.

There still the thanks unheard await
The unconscious gift bequeathed :
For there my soul this hour has breathed
An air inviolate.

“ Love's Nocturne ” is a far more difficult poem : it deals with visions of the night, with the shapes one would fain see in dreams, and those which more often take their place ; in the rush and confusion of its words and images, it seems to catch at times the very spirit of Dreamland itself.

The speaker longs to guide his lady's visions :

Ah ! that from all dreams I might
Choose one dream and guide its flight !
I know well
What her sleep should tell to-night.

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But that none can do : he dwells on the shapes
that fill her dreams and his own, and in verses
that are in themselves dreamlike in their misty
beauty : while she sleeps

Poets' fancies all are there :

There the elf-girls flood with wings

Valleys full of plaintive airs ;

There breathe perfumes ; there in rings

Whirl the foam-bewildered springs ;

Siren there

Winds her dizzy hair and sings.

What can give better the mysterious sense of
disappointment in a dream than this verse ?

Reft of her, my dreams are all

Clammy trance that fears the sky :

Changing footpaths shift and fall ;

From polluted coverts nigh,

Miserable phantoms sigh ;

Quakes the pall,

And the funeral goes by.

The poem needs study in order to grasp its full
meaning ; it contains one specially poor rhyme,
that of " teeth " to " breathe."

The " Sonnet-Sequence," which appeared in
the later editions of Rossetti's poems under
the title " The House of Life," was only
partially contained in the volume of 1870.
There it was headed " Sonnets and Songs,
towards a Work to be called ' The House of
Life ' " : this, in its later form, was confined

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to sonnets. Concerning the name Mr. W. M. Rossetti says: "I am not aware that any question has been raised as to the meaning of the title 'The House of Life'; nor did I ever hear any explanation of it from my brother. He was fond of anything related to astrology or horoscopy—not indeed that he ever paid the least detailed or practical attention to these obsolete speculations; and I understand him to use the term 'The House of Life' as a zodiacal adept uses the term 'the house of Leo.' As the sun is said to be 'in the house of Leo,' so (as I construe it) Rossetti indicates 'Love, Change, and Fate' as being 'in the House of Life'; or, in other words, a Human Life is ruled and pervaded by the triple influence of Love, Change, and Fate." In answer to the charge of obscurity, which has been sometimes brought against these sonnets, Mr. W. M. Rossetti writes: "The sonnets are mostly of the kind which we call 'occasional'; some incident happened, or some emotion was dominant, and the author wrote a sonnet regarding it. When a good number had been written, they came to form, if considered collectively, a sort of record of his feelings and experiences, his reading of the problems of life—an inscribed tablet of his mind: then, but not before then, he began marshalling them together, and entitled them 'The House of Life.'"

The whole idea and arrangement of these sonnets renders quotation difficult: one can but pick out here and there those which illus-

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trate a special thought, or which seem to answer directly one to another. Such an answer seems to lie in the sonnet numbered XXI in "The House of Life" as it appears in the complete edition, and called "Love Sweetness," to "Lovesight," No. IV.

LOVESIGHT

When do I see thee most, beloved one ?

When in the light the spirits of mine eyes

Before thy face, their altar, solemnize

The worship of that Love through thee made known ?

Or when, in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)

Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies

Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,

And my soul only sees thy soul its own ?

O love, my love ! if I no more should see

Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,

Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—

How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope

The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,

The wind of Death's imperishable wing ?

LOVE-SWEETNESS

Sweet dimness of her loosened hair's downfall

About thy face ; her sweet hands round thy head

In gracious fostering union garlanded ;

Her tremulous smiles ; her glances' sweet recall

Of love ; her murmuring sighs memorial ;

Her mouth's culled sweetness by thy kisses shed

On cheeks and neck and eyelids, and so led

Back to her mouth which answers there for all :—

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What sweeter than these things, except the thing

In lacking which all these would lose their sweet :—

The confident heart's still fervour : the swift beat
And soft subsidence of the spirit's wing,

Then when it feels, in cloud-girt wayfaring,

The breath of kindred plumes against its feet ?

Besides their own power and beauty, these sonnets have the added interest that they enable one to trace through their lines Rossetti's thoughts and feelings toward the greatest attributes and events of life. His voice speaks again in "The Monochord" (LXXIX in "The House of Life") of the doubts and terrors both of reality and imagination, through which lay "the road I came"; and, like a trumpet-blast of warning to those who come after him, sound backward out of the darkness the familiar words of "Lost Days" (LXXXVI).

THE MONOCHORD

Is it this sky's vast vault or ocean's sound

That is Life's self and draws my life from me,

And by instinct ineffable decree

Holds my breath quailing on the bitter bound ?

Nay, is it Life or Death, thus thunder crown'd,

That 'mid the tide of all emergency

Now notes my separate wave, and to what sea

Its difficult eddies labour in the ground ?

Oh ! what is this that knows the road I came,

The flame turned cloud, the cloud returned to flame,

The lifted shifted steps and all the way ?—

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That draws round me at last this wind-warm space,
And in regenerate rapture turns my face
Upon the devious coverts of dismay ?

LOST DAYS

The lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell ? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay ?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay ?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet ?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of Hell, athirst alway ?

I do not see them here ; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
“ I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me ? ”
“ And I—and I—thyself,” (lo ! each one saith,)
“ And thou thyself to all eternity ! ”

Of this “ Sonnet-Sequence ” as a whole Mr. W. M. Rossetti writes : “ There is, I fancy, a prevailing impression that the tone of ‘ The House of Life ’ is one of constant and little-mitigated gloom.” I would venture to say that, if this is the case, such an impression is due to the fact that those sonnets which deal with the sadder side of life and its emotions strike deeper than the corresponding height attained in those dealing with joy and its attributes.

Take, for example, the two sonnets “ Lost on Both Sides ” (XCI) and “ A Superscription ” (XCVII), and compare the sheer depth of suffering which each reveals with the rapture of joy

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shown in the two already quoted, "Lovesight" and "Love-Sweetness."

LOST ON BOTH SIDES

As when two men have loved a woman well,
Each hating each, through Love's and Death's
deceit ;

Since not for either this stark marriage-sheet
And the long pauses of this wedding-bell ;
Yet o'er her grave the night and day dispel
At last their feud forlorn, with cold and heat ;
Nor other than dear friends to death may fleet
The two lives left that most of her can tell :—

So separate hopes, which in a soul had wooed
The one same Peace, strove with each other long,
And Peace before their faces perished since :
So through that soul, in restless brotherhood,
They roam together now, and wind among
Its by-streets, knocking at the dusty inns.

A SUPERScription

Look in my face ; my name is Might-have-been ;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell ;
Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell
Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between ;
Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
Which had Life's form and Love's, but by my spell
Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.

Mark me, how still I am ! But should there dart
One moment through thy soul the soft surprise
Of that winged Peace which lulls the breath of
sighs,—

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Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart
Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart
Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.

Perhaps the most characteristic sign of the intensity of this minor note throughout "The House of Life" is in each reference to Hope, so clearly the Hope of Mr. Watts' picture, with all but the last string of the lute snapped. Take the first four lines from "The One Hope" (CI) in the later edition of the poems; sonnet L in that of 1870, from which these lines—slightly altered in the later edition—are quoted :

When all desire at last and all regret
Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
And teach the forgetful to forget ?

Or take again the wail of the last line in "Hope Overtaken," which did not appear till the later volume :

Alas, cling round me, for the day is done !

But, whatever its limitations, "The House of Life" makes noble reading for those who have eyes to see the mind of which it is an index : the connexion between the various sonnets is not always obvious, but those who care for Rossetti and his work can trace in them every shade of his mind and thought, dealing alike with things bodily, mental, and spiritual.

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X

IT was in 1868 that the shadow, never again to be lifted, began to darken Rossetti's life. In August of that year he wrote to Allingham, "I've been very seedy, and still am rather so, but doctors have been doing me some good." According to his brother, even before this date he had begun to be threatened with insomnia, the curse of so many a man of his type. For the relief of this evil, intolerable to one of his restless energy, he had been advised by a friend to use the newly discovered drug chloral, the properties, and specially the after-effects of which, were not at the time fully understood. "My brother," says Mr. W. M. Rossetti, "was one of the men least fitted to try any such experiment with impunity. He began, I understand, with nightly doses of chloral of ten grains. In course of time it got to one hundred and eighty grains!" All know and deplore the fact that the ruin of his brilliant career, the wreck of his life, and his death at the age of 54, were the result of his gradual subjection to the poisonous drug.

But by one of those ironical strokes with which Fate seems often to check the promise of her greatest sons, soon after Rossetti had learned the use of the dangerous narcotic, there occurred the one incident in his life which did most to aggravate his tendency to insomnia, and at the same time to render its horrors most unbearable.

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Hitherto, with little exception, the world had honoured him. Except some general criticism of the Pre-Raphaelites, which he had shared with the rest of the Brotherhood, little had been said of his work which he could take amiss. On the publication of the "Poems" in 1870 the same treatment seemed to follow him, and the book met with an enthusiastic and well-merited welcome. But suddenly, from a sky apparently clear, fell a bolt whose power for evil was far greater than anyone could have foreseen. Rossetti was enjoying to the full the eager and appreciative praises which were accorded on all sides to the poems published under such tragic circumstances, when the check came, and the ugly slur was cast upon him which—unjust though it undoubtedly was—proved too much for his highly strung and sensitive nature.

There can be little doubt that his increased sufferings from insomnia, and consequently increased use of the fatal chloral, were largely due to the publication in the October number of the "Contemporary Review" for 1871, of the article styled "The Fleshly School of Poetry." It was signed "Thomas Maitland," but was the work of Robert Buchanan published under a pseudonym, which was unusual in the "Contemporary." It is not possible to discuss here at any length either the article itself, the correspondence to which it led, or Rossetti's answer, "The Stealthy School of Criticism," which appeared soon afterwards in

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the "Athenæum." But the drift of the article and its effect on Rossetti are soon stated. It opens by comparing the literary figures of the day to the characters in "Hamlet," and deploras the fact that certain "walking-on gentlemen," to wit Osric, Rosencranz and Guildenstern, for whose parts the author casts respectively Rossetti, Swinburne and Morris, are allowed to make themselves heard above the principal characters. "Hamlet," according to the writer of the article, is played by Tennyson and Browning on alternate nights, Horatio by Matthew Arnold, Voltimand by Bailey, A Gentleman by Robert Lytton, and Cornelius by Buchanan (!). The article is vigorous and ingenious, but the judgments and pronouncements are so extraordinary that one cannot help wondering at even so sensitive a man as Rossetti feeling deeply the utterances of such a critic. Morris is set aside as "glibly imitative," Swinburne as "transcendently superficial." The critic had apparently read both "Sister Helen" and "The Last Confession," and yet said, "Mr. Rossetti is never dramatic." He spoke of the "false and shallow mysticism of 'Eden Bower'"; the "affected rubbish" about "Eden Bower" and "Sister Helen"; the "sad nonsense" or "if not . . . very meretricious affectation" of much of the work; and even sank to the simplest form of adverse criticism, that of calling the poems "trash." Although he wrote anonymously, he introduced himself into the article: "Jenny," he wrote,

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"... is a production which bears signs of having been suggested by Mr. Buchanan's quasi-lyrical poems, which it copies in the style and title, and particularly by 'Artist and Model.' "

This point especially irritated Rossetti, whose answer in the "Athenæum" on December 16, 1871, was throughout the utterance of a very angry man: "There is another little charge, however," he says near the end of his article, "which this minstrel in mufti brings against 'Jenny,' namely, one of plagiarism from that very poetic self of his which the tutelary prose does but enshroud for the moment. This question can, fortunately, be settled with ease by others who have read my critic's poems; and thus I need the less regret that, not happening myself to be in that position, I must be content to rank with those who cannot pretend to an opinion on the subject." He alludes to the author of the "Contemporary" article as "Mr. Robert-Thomas"—an ironical combination of the real and assumed Christian names—and discusses what he calls "the Siamese aspect of the entertainment provided by the 'Review,'" doubtless an allusion to the Siamese Twins so famous in his day!

On one point the article was undoubtedly just, and that was its criticism on the careless and faulty rhyming of Rossetti and his school; but the review was unsympathetic from start to finish, besides containing the special attack which made it notorious.

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The accusation brought against the author of the "Poems" was that of writing from a moral standpoint which could only be described as corrupt. Swinburne and Morris were included in the charge of having bound themselves by "a solemn league and covenant to extol fleshliness as the distinct and supreme end of poetic and pictorial art; to aver that poetic expression is greater than poetic thought, and by inference that the body is greater than the soul, and sound superior to sense." That Rossetti was a painter as well as a poet, and so saw the world with the true artist's unsparing fidelity to nature, was never taken into account; in fact the creator of "*Ecce Ancilla Domini*," "*Beata Beatrix*," and "*Dante's Dream*" was put down as "an artist who conceives unpleasantly and draws ill." "The fleshly school of verse-writers"—so the article goes on—"are, so to speak, public offenders, because they are diligently spreading the seeds of disease broadcast wherever they are read and understood." In the light of their after achievements it is odd to hear Swinburne, Morris, and Rossetti summed up as "the fantastic figures of the fleshly school, with their droll mediæval garments, their funny archaic speech, and the fatal marks of literary consumption in every pale and delicate visage."

To those who have drunk deep draughts of spiritual refreshment from passages in "*The Blessed Damozel*," "*Ave*," or "*My Sister's Sleep*"; who have been carried back to the simple, mediæval world of passion and action

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in the ballads of "Staff and Scrip" and "Eden Bower," or "Sister Helen" with its faithful reproduction of the spirit of early tragedy; or who have gathered for themselves wise sayings, helpful phrases, and gleams of insight into "that which is invisible" in such sonnets as "The Choice," "Lost Days," or "The Superscription," the accusation brought against Rossetti must always stand as the strongest instance known in literary history of "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*." Professor Saintsbury, in his recent volume on "The History of English Prosody," gathers up and dismisses the charge in one masterly sentence of his characteristically vigorous English. This is no place for full discussion on either side: our business here is only to mark the sad fact that from the time his reputation received this slur—however unjust it may have been—Rossetti was an altered man. It is easy to say that he took the whole matter too seriously; that may be so, though as a fact he did, in the beginning, show some amusement at a controversy on the unusual fact of a "*nom-de-plume*" being used by a contributor to the "Contemporary Review." But the article was enlarged and reproduced in pamphlet form, and then it could hardly be taken as anything but serious. A man of another temperament, and one who had been inured earlier to adverse criticism, might have taken the matter differently; but every man is himself, and must suffer according to his own nature. Rossetti could not have produced

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the work he did had he not been capable of shades of feeling far finer than those of ordinary men ; and therefore, in this case, his suffering was proportionately bitter. Nor must it be forgotten that from only one grandparent—his mother's mother—could he have hoped to inherit any of that commodity so useful in times of intolerable strain—British pluck.

The fact remains : the weapon with which the wound had been dealt was poisoned, and in Rossetti's case the poison proved fatal.

His brother says : "He allowed a sense of unfair treatment, and a suspicion that the slur cast upon himself and his writings might be widely accepted as true, to eat into his very vitals, gravely altering his tone of mind and character, his attitude towards the world, and his habits of life." And he goes on to speak of the increased sleeplessness and the reckless use of the chloral, and of the intense mental suffering under the accusation ; and he adds, "all three had their share in making my brother a changed man from 1872 onwards."

In justice to Buchanan, and in proof also that he lived to recognize his mistake, we give here his words of a later date to Mr. Hall Caine : "I make full admission of Rossetti's claims to the purest kind of literary renown, and if I were to criticize his poems now, I should write very differently." The romance, "God and the Man," had been published by Buchanan in 1881, and dedicated to Rossetti in lines entitled, "To an old Enemy."

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"I would have snatch'd a bay-leaf from thy brow,
Wrongs the chaplet on an honoured head ;
In peace and charity I bring thee now
A lily-flower instead.

Pure as thy purpose, blameless as thy song,
Sweet as thy spirit, may this offering be ;
Forget the bitter blame that did thee wrong,
And take the gift from me ! "

Rossetti was pleased at the dedication, and all that it implied : after his death Buchanan added to it the following verses :

TO DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Calmly thy royal robe of death around thee,
Thou sleepest, and weeping brethren round thee
stand—
Gently they placed—ere yet God's angel crown'd thee,
My lily in thy hand !

I never knew thee living, O my brother !
But on thy breast my lily of love now lies ;
And by that token, we shall know each other,
When God's voice saith, " Arise ! "

Beautiful and appropriate as the lines are, they make but one more of the many instances where lilies to grace the dead have proved but a poor compensation for unjust treatment of the living.

From the end of the year 1872, as his brother said, Rossetti was a changed man. He became moody and unsociable, and took to

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keeping always later and later hours, and also to following habits which more than ever tended to alienate him from his fellow men. He would walk out but little, and often only after dark, or in his garden, among his strange animals. He dropped many of his old friends, and grew irritable and suspicious even with those for whom he really cared deeply: this change in his genial nature was, of course, the direct effect of the ever-increasing doses of chloral with which he was trying to fight the insomnia fiend.

The "Poems" had been fitly dedicated to his brother, the friend whose whole-hearted sympathy and lifelong interest and companionship had been more than that of an ordinary brother. Partly owing to his failing health, and his consequently unsociable ways and odd habits, some of his friends became estranged from him, but the brother who had shared his boyish efforts in producing the family magazine "Hotchpotch," and had worked with him in the big playroom which Mr. Cottingham had misnamed "a garret," gave him in these now darkening years the same ungrudging comradeship and love. Every week they spent at least one evening together, and both in his painting and his writing his brother was his ever-ready critic. The gatherings of friends in the big studio continued, although the master had lost much of the buoyancy he brought to them in earlier days. But he would still read and recite in the deep rich voice which to the

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end was one of his greatest charms, and to the music of which many of those hearers have borne testimony. He still had pleasure in seeing his friends, though the visits he paid to others grew less and less frequent, and his dread of new faces increased as time went on.

For the last years of his life one of his closest friends was Mr. Theodore Watts (now Watts Dunton), whose care and devotion knew no bounds. His friendship with Mr. Hall Caine, though carried on for two years previously by letter, only extended personally over the last two years of his life; but during those two years their intercourse was close and constant, and Mr. Hall Caine's "Recollections" bear their own testimony to the affectionate nature of their relationship to one another.

XI

THOUGH failing in health, Rossetti never relinquished work, either with brush or pen, during the last years of his life. The account of his pictures must be read elsewhere, and fits in with that of the poems; "The Blessed Damozel" he reproduced more than once in oil or crayon; and a pen-and-ink sketch of "Sister Helen" and a tinted wash of "Troy Town," both owned by his brother, were executed about this time.

"Troy Town" was one of the few poems other than sonnets which he published dealing with a classical subject; it may be that neither

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his mind nor methods lent themselves readily to a classical setting, for the ballad lacks the wild beauty and power of "Sister Helen" and the mystic charm of "Eden Bower." "Heaven-born Helen, Sparta's Queen," never seems quite to live before us as does her merciless Scottish namesake, or Lilith the snake-witch of Eden. The single-lined refrain is effective, but that of the couplet ending each verse is hardly so musical as most of the ballad choruses, and strikes the ear at times as almost wooden. The story is that of Helen of Troy suing to Venus for the love of Paris : she brings an offering of a "carven cup," and entreats the goddess by the memory of that judgment of Paris given once long ago in her favour.

"Once an apple stirred the beat
Of thy heart with the heart's desire :—
Say, who brought it then to thy feet ?
*(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire !)*

"They that claimed it then were three :
(O Troy Town !)
For thy sake two hearts did he
Make forlorn of the heart's desire.
Do for him as he did for thee ! "
*(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire !)*

Venus looked on Helen's gift,
(O Troy Town !)
Looked and smiled with subtle drift,

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Saw the work of her heart's desire :—
" There thou kneel'st for Love to lift ! "

*(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire !)*

In Helen's proud heart the dart of Venus's messenger had already done its work ; and now

Cupid took another dart,

(O Troy Town !)

Fledged it for another heart,

Winged the shaft with the heart's desire,
Drew the string and said, " Depart ! "

*(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire !)*

Paris turned upon his bed,

(O Troy Town !)

Turned upon his bed and said,

Dead at heart with the heart's desire—
" Oh, to clasp her golden head ! "

*(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire !)*

The poem is interesting as being the only ballad in which Rossetti attempted to deal with a classical subject, but that subject loses something of its natural force by what Mr. Knight has aptly called its " gothic setting."

Akin in subject to " Troy Town " is the sonnet " Venus," called in the later editions " Venus Verticordia " :

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VENUS

(FOR A PICTURE)

She hath the apple in her hand for thee,
Yet almost in her heart would hold it back ;
She muses, with her eyes upon the track
Of that which in thy spirit they can see.
Haply, " Behold, he is at peace," saith she ;
" Alas ! the apple for his lips,—the dart
That follows its brief sweetness to his heart,—
The wandering of his feet perpetually ! "

A little space her glance is still and coy,
But if she give the fruit that works her spell,
Those eyes shall flame as for her Phrygian boy.
Then shall her bird's strained throat the woe foretell,
And her far seas moan as a single shell,
And her grove glow with love-lit fires of Troy.

The last line in this sonnet is changed in the later editions, considerably for the better ; it runs :

And through her dark grove strike the light of Troy.

The thought is more tersely expressed, and the awkward double " o " sound in " grove " and " glow " is lost.

The Past was always to Rossetti more real than the Present : with contemporary events he concerned himself but little, and with the judgments of others on those events still less.

In the historical ballads of his later volume, which are among his finest works, the Scotland of James I's time and the England of Henry I's

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are finely reproduced; but only by memory, not internal evidence, does one connect the year of the publication of the "Poems" with that of the Franco-German War. Perhaps the only lines in that volume into which can be read thoughts connected with the state of Europe at the time are those of the sonnet entitled

ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS

Not that the earth is changing, O my God !
Nor that the seasons totter in their walk,—
Not that the virulent ill of act and talk
Seethes ever as a winepress ever trod,—
Not therefore are we certain that the rod
Weighs in Thine hand to smite Thy world ; though
now
Beneath Thine hand so many nations bow,
So many kings :—not therefore, O my God !—

But because Man is parcelled out in men
To-day ; because, for any wrongful blow
No man not stricken asks, " I would be told
Why Thou dost thus " ; but his heart whispers then,
" He is He, I am I." By this we know
That our earth falls asunder, being old.

But, appropriate as it was to the state of European affairs on its publication, it had been written, though possibly in a different form, more than twenty years before. The "Pre-Raphaelite Journal" for Sunday, August 26 (1849), bears the following entry : "Gabriel wrote a sonnet entitled 'For the Things of these Days,'"; and below follows a note by Mr. W. M.

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Rossetti, "Must be the same as 'On the Refusal of Aid between Nations.'"

To the end of his life Rossetti was a worker. His pictures never commanded sufficiently high prices during his lifetime to render him independent of money-making, though the publication of the "Poems" in 1870 had brought his name before the world in such a way as to add greatly to his artistic reputation. He was urged by his friends to develop further his efforts both in sonnet and ballad form, with the result that in 1881 he published a second volume of poems entitled "Ballads and Sonnets": the longest ballad in the book, "The King's Tragedy," has been pronounced by many good judges to be his finest work.

It evidently gained his own approval, for early in 1881 he wrote: "I am writing a ballad on the death of James I of Scots. It is already twice the length of 'The White Ship' and has a good slice still to come. It is called 'The King's Tragedy,' and is a ripper, I can tell you!"

The ballad reproduces with extraordinary power both the historical scenes and figures in the Scotland of our Henry VI's day and also that wild spirit of mystic superstition so deeply rooted in the Celtic mind and so beloved of Rossetti himself. That spirit haunts the whole poem in the figure of the woman, "gaunt and strong," who repeatedly warns King James of his doom, according to the legend of the shrouded wraith.

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She stands before him in the moonlight by the sea, as he is going north to keep his Christmas at Perth ; and she cries to him :

“ O King, thou art come at last ;
But thy wraith has haunted the Scottish Sea
To my sight for four years past.”

She foretells the accomplishment of his doom by the progress in her repeated visions of that cere-cloth, or winding-sheet, around his body. First his feet alone “ clung close in a shroud ” ; then, at intervals of a year, the sheet had risen over knees and breast and throat, until she now foresees the end at hand :

“ And when I meet thee again, O King,
That of death hast such sore drouth,—
Except thou turn again on this shore,—
The winding-sheet shall have moved once more
And covered thine eyes and mouth.”

But the King refuses her warning in lines which are among the finest Rossetti ever penned, and he goes on his way to meet his Fate,

“ to His will resign’d
Who has but one same death for a hind
And one same death for a king.”

Twice again in the poem comes the haunting cry, once when the woman is refused admission to the King’s presence at the feast and cries her last warning to the usher beneath the window, and once more when she announces the fulfilment of the doom in words for all to hear.

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No less vivid than the weird figure of this woman, and the superstition of which she is the embodiment, are the pictures of James I himself and his English bride, Joan of Somerset. James stands again before us in all the gallant grace bred in the long years of his captivity—those years in which the chivalry of England's knighthood had been his training and Prince Hal and the wise John of Bedford his companions. Throughout the poem rings an echo of his famous utterance, for the fulfilment of which he died : " I will make the key keep the castle, and the brackenbush keep the cow, though I live the life of a dog to bring it about."

For he had tamed the nobles' lust
And curbed their power and pride,
And reached out an arm to right the poor
Through Scotland far and wide.

Another true note that sounds throughout the ballad is that which tells of the passionate love uniting to the end the royal pair, from the day when

At Scone were the happy lovers crowned,
A heart-wed King and Queen,

to the eve of his death, when

the King was loth to stir from her side
For as on the day when she was his bride,
Even so he loved her yet.

The tale of life at the northern court has nowhere been better told than in these simple

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rolling lines; the grim scenes in Scottish history rise one after the other with almost unbroken historical accuracy, and yet glowing with the genius alike of painter and of poet. We see in turn the state of Scotland, being slowly reclaimed from lawless misery; the angry and rebellious barons, divided by their fierce and often hereditary feuds; and Catherine Douglas, who tells the tale, and who earned her proud title of Kate Barlass by her gallant attempt to stay the King's murderers with her arm thrust through the stanchions of the vanished bolts:

“ 'Twas Catherine Douglas sprang to the door,
But I fell back Kate Barlass.”

In the weird woman's last despairing cry beneath the chamber window occurs one of the few historical inaccuracies of the poem; the King's death took place in the Monastery of the Black Friars, and not the Charterhouse. It is well to notice this small point, especially as the value of such a ballad for young students, in giving life to the dead bones of history, can hardly be over-estimated. The spirit of Scotch tragedy is faithfully reproduced throughout the poem, the characters are true to life, the details move one as those of to-day, and stanzas are cleverly inserted from James's own poem, “The King's Quair.” Toward the end the verses seem to glow with the smouldering fire of the hidden plot; then the fire bursts forth, and the “King's Tragedy” is seen in all its horror: Catherine Douglas's act of futile grandeur is

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accomplished, she has fallen back Kate Barlass,
and in the Pit of Fortune's Wheel the

King lay slain
With sixteen wounds in his breast.

Then the ballad sinks to a minor key ; it tells of the pursuit and capture of the traitors one by one, and of the awful fate meted out to them by command of the widowed Queen ; and it ends with the picture, as sad as any ever seen in history or fiction, that of the broken-hearted Joan of Scotland in her frenzied exultation over her revenge :

And then she said,—“ My King, they are dead ! ”
And she knelt on the chapel-floor,
And whispered low with a strange proud smile,—
“ James, James, they suffered more ! ”

The ballad of “ The White Ship ” does not rise to the same heights of inspired song as does “ The King's Tragedy,” but it gives a vivid reproduction of a famous episode in English history, and there is something akin to inspiration in the choice of such a metre for such a subject. As all light died out in the life of Henry I when his son was drowned, so all spirit seems quenched in the dull monotony, that becomes at times almost a drone, of the two-lined verses in which the ballad runs. Nothing could accord better with the dull, sad utterances of “ poor Berold,” “ the butcher of Rouen ” who tells the tale :

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'Twas so in my youth I heard men say,
And my old age calls it back to-day.

We see once more Henry I in his last loveless years, and we live again with him through the tragic scenes that ended the hopes of his life.

The journey to Normandy is described, with its fatal homeward passage; the request of "stout Fitz-Stephen," the "pilot famous in seafaring," to guide the King's voyage in his "famed White Ship," and Henry's bestowal on him as passengers of the Prince and his sister. The story of the voyage is followed faithfully, and the end of the Prince whom "nothing beseeemed like his manner of dying":

He was a Prince of lust and pride;
He showed no grace till the hour he died.

God only knows where his soul did wake,
But I saw him die for his sister's sake.

Then the scene opens again in the quiet moonlight, where the knight and the pilot and the poor butcher are all that remain on the sea's broad breast out of that gay ship's company.

Faithful to the story, Fitz-Stephen is made to sink of his own free will at the news of the Prince's death; then Godefroy de l'Aigle's strength gives out, and Berold is left alone.

Three hundred souls were all lost but one,
And I drifted over the sea alone.

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Then he tells of his rescue, his confession to the priest, and his journey with him

To King Henry's court at Winchester.

All know how none dared tell the news ;
and the ballad seems to drop out its monotonous lines, one after another, in curious accordance with that time of waiting : there is a moment's relief at the entry before the King

Of a little boy with golden hair ;

but he comes only to tell the awful news of the Prince's death, and the royal father sinks backward " as a man struck dead."

But this King never smiled again :

The famous saying is given prominence by being printed alone, as a separate verse ; and the ballad ends with a repetition of the opening stanza :

By none but we can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.

(Lands are swayed by a king on a throne.)

'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,

Yet the tale can be told by none but me.

(The sea hath no king but God alone.)

It had been at Kelmscott Manor, in 1871, his brother tells us, that Rossetti began the third long ballad of the volume, " Rose Mary," which does not deal with an historical subject.

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The mystic beryl-stone of the East, in which none but the pure may read, is the key on which the story turns, the story of Rose Mary and her sin and sorrow :

Of her two fights with the Beryl-stone :
Lost the first, but the second won.

It is a fine ballad, but must be studied as a whole to be fully appreciated, with its rich imagination, its Oriental touches, and the simple pathos of its story. There are no more musical lines in the volume than are found here, in the cry of the stricken mother and daughter to one another :

“ Hush, sweet, hush ! be calm and behold.”

“ I see two floodgates broken and old :

The grasses wave o’er the ruined weir,

But the bridge still leads to the breakwater ;

And—mother, mother, O mother dear ! ”

The mother looked on the daughter still

As on a hurt thing that’s yet to kill.

Then wildly at length the pent tears came ;

The love swelled high with the swollen shame,

And their hearts’ tempest burst on them.

These three ballads formed with “ The House of Life ” the chief part of Rossetti’s volume of 1881, though there are many other poems in it, and also in the earlier volume, with which it has been impossible to deal, but which should never remain unknown to any student of literature.

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Translation was another gift in which Rossetti was pre-eminent among English poets: his volume, "The Early Italian Poets," published in 1861, was, as his brother puts it, "very well received—so far as a book of translated poems has in this country a chance of welcome and encomium—and gave Rossetti a sufficiently solid position as a scholar in his own line of study, and a poet as well, for it was recognized that none save a poet in his own right could have made such a transfer of poetry from one language into another." Italian was, of course, to him an early known medium for expression, but his genius for translating the spirit as well as the words of a poem is shown also in other tongues. A well-known English classical scholar places as high as any translated verse in the English language his "Ballad of Dead Ladies," from François Villon, and "One Girl (a combination from Sappho)."

But the fifty-four years were drawing to a close, and Rossetti's career was nearly over. Changes to country air, to Kelmscott Manor and the Lakes, were powerless to arrest his illness, or the use of the drug which was killing him. Perhaps with such a nature as his it was best that the end should not be longer drawn out. He enjoyed the society of his friends to the last, and he had but just been visited by Philip Bourke Marston and his father, when he was suddenly stricken with paralysis of the right side. This was the beginning of the end. In January 1882 he was moved down

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to Birchington, a little place on the Kentish coast about four miles from Margate, to the house of Mr. J. P. Seddon. The loving friendship and family affection which had enriched his life did not fail him at the last : his mother was with him and his brother and sister, and a faithful band of friends, and in their presence he passed away on Easter Day, April 9, 1882, at the age of fifty-four.

So died Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a man hard to place among English poets because he was an Italian as well as an Englishman, a painter as well as a poet. He had the double nature, and some have found it hard to forgive him the double weaknesses which that nature entailed.

He lived and wrote in an atmosphere heavy with scent and sound and beauty, essentially un-English ; but for that very reason his work is of special value, and he holds a unique position among English poets.

For though the atmosphere was heavy, the man who dwelt within it was a genius ; and even as that genius echoed in the memory of his friends on that April morning round the Kentish grave, so it must echo always to us in the varied beauties of " The House of Life," the wild music of " Sister Helen," or the matchless wonder of " The Blessed Damozel."

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